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No. 136.

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POCKET NOVELS



Scarlet Moccasin.



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SCARLET MOCCASIN;

OR,

THE FOREST FORT'S QUEEN.

BY PAUL BIBBS,

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SCARLET MOCCASIN.

OR,

THE FOREST FORT'S QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

RAPIERS FOR TWO.

"COME, Montgomery," said my friend St. Pierre, rushing into my room early one morning, "have you forgotten that we start to-day? Wait! Let me order a mint julep, or a sherry cobbler, and—"

"No, no," cried I, interrupting my kind-hearted and impetuous friend; "I'm all right, I assure you. I'll be up in a squirrel's jump."

I forthwith arose; and, after completing my toilet, we descended to the piazza of the hotel. It was, as yet, but early morning; yet the streets of New Orleans were thronged with thousands of hurrying men, women and children. Upon the piazza a somewhat large and motley crowd had assembled. With a single glance I could pick you out the speculator, the tradesman, the sailor, or the silent, observing tourist.

Upon that piazza stood a representative of almost every civilized land upon earth. There stood the light-haired, light-complexioned Scandinavian, in close proximity with the dark-haired, dark-visaged son of Gaul. There stood the short, healthy-looking Briton, the florid representative of "bonnie Caledonia," beside the long, gaunt specimen from the mountains of Vermont. Among all that assemblage, perhaps, there could not have been found two with corresponding ideas, though all their thoughts were centered upon one grand point, the commencement of the road that leads to wealth. Some—these were foreigners—were going to seek it in the wild West—to turn over the yielding land with the sturdy plowshare.

Many of those that stood there possessed capital which they were ready to invest in the first seemingly profitable scheme. Others were there who made it their business to watch and take advantage of the cotton, sugar, tobacco, and other markets.

The breakfast bell rung. For a moment the crowd forgot their intended speculations, and made one general rush into the breakfast-room.

At the breakfast-table, directly opposite me, there seated himself an individual whose appearance I could not help particularly noticing. He was a man of perhaps twenty-five years of age. He was of medium size and stature, with light-brown hair, large, round, blue eyes, and a daintily-curved mustache. He wore a pair of lacquered pumps, and when he stepped about in them, it was with the motion of one who is conscious of walking upon bad eggs. His pantaloons were composed of the finest cloth, of a sky-blue color; his coat was cut in the latest fashion, and made of the finest broadcloth. Fastened around his neck was a piece of orange-colored ribbon, at the end of which was attached one of those indications of snobbery, an eye-glass. A black satin waistcoat, a scrupulously clean shirt-bosom, and hair parted in the middle, completed his toilet. I recognized the class to which he belonged at once. In short, he was one of those individuals called "London swells." I had seen them in their native element, and could therefore recognize one when out of it.

He had scarcely seated himself at the table, when he said, bestowing upon me at the same time a very patronising look—

"Ma deaw fellah, paas me the cw-it."

I pushed the polished cruet-stand toward the individual, feeling any thing but pleased at the manner in which he addressed me. I looked sideways at my staunch American friend. He was seated close to my elbow, and had been a silent witness of the slight transaction between me and my "opposite." He was, as I have said, a true American, and a democrat—I speak not of his party, but of his principle—to boot. He was an intense hater of snobdom, and every thing pertaining to it. He was gazing quietly upon the "gentleman from London," with an expression of extreme hatred and contempt.

But the "gentleman" seemed not to heed either of us, and when he had satiated his by no means small appetite, he arose

from the table, and strode away with as majestic an air as it was possible for him to assume.

The boat which was to convey St. Pierre and myself up the Mississippi did not leave the wharf before eight o'clock. When we arose from the breakfast-table, it was but half past six. Thus we had an hour and a half to kill before the time came for starting.

We entered the saloon attached to the hotel. There was fully a score of others in the room, besides ourselves. Most of them my friend seemed well acquainted with.

"Let's liquor," he said, stepping up to the bar.

More than half of the rest stepped up to the bar, calling loudly for the kind of drink they wished. A few still kept their seats. These were foreigners, and strangers to St. Pierre.

"Come, gentlemen," said St. Pierre, addressing those that remained behind, "won't you have something?"

The invitation was not lost upon them. With but one exception, the lagging ones approached the nicely kept bar. That one exception was the London gentleman.

"Do you refuse to drink with me, sir?" said my friend, addressing him.

"Of cawse, saw," was the reply.

"Upon what grounds, sir?"

"Upon these heal gwounds," said Snobby, trying to appear witty.

"Come," said St. Pierre, growing red in the face. "Why do you refuse to partake of my hospitality?"

"Because, saw, I am a gentleman. Ah nevah dwink with stwangaws."

"Well, sir," taking offense at the remark, more at the manner in which it was said, than at the words themselves, "what of it? It is the custom in these parts to drink with whoever asks you; whether it is the custom to do so in Johnny Bull's land, or not. Drink, gentlemen."

I turned, with the rest toward the bar, and was soon employed in the delightful occupation of quaffing down a cool "mint julep," one of the most delightful of summer beverages. When I had emptied my glass, I turned around to take another survey of the Londoner. He had lain aside the morning's paper he had held in his hand a few moments

before, his right hand had been engaged in holding up his eye-glass, through which he appeared to be taking a very careful survey of my friend.

I looked at St. Pierre. He had drawn up his fine form to its full height, and was watching the other with eyes fairly flashing with indignation. I saw that a storm was brewing; so did several others. The Londoner must have perceived it, too; still, he kept his eye-glass in the same insulting position. At last St. Pierre could stand it no longer:

"Well, sir," he said, in a voice of thunder, "do you see any thing *very* singular in my appearance? Do you take me for an escaped gorilla? If not that, what, then?"

"A gowillar!" said the other, removing his eye-glass, "deah, no. By yaw looks, aw should say yaw pwofession was that of a—ah! let me see; of a—"

He hesitated about finishing the sentence.

"My profession, sir?" said St. Pierre, calmly. "What is it?"

"P'waps that of a loafer," was the reply.

St. Pierre had heard enough. Quickly springing forward, he caught the "cockney" by the throat.

"Recall that," he said, hoarsely, "or, by heaven! I'll strangle you."

The "swell" was getting very red in the face. St. Pierre's fingers tightly clutched his throat. I knew the latter's fierce temper. I knew that he would choke his aggravator, if not interfered with. I stepped quickly forward, and seized my friend by the arm.

"St. Pierre," I said, "see! you are strangling him!"

My warning was unheeded; and I flung myself with all my energy upon him. By this time, several others had stepped forward; and St. Pierre was made to release his clutch on the Londoner's throat by main force.

"Ha! my fine fellow," said the latter, when once more able to speak, "yaw shall catch it faw this! Saw, ah shall take the libawty to send you a challenge."

"Very good," said St. Pierre. "How soon? Why not settle it now. See, I have the weapons."

He drew from his pocket two small, silver-mounted pistols; one of which he offered to his antagonist. It was refused.

"No, saw. Aw 'm no outlaw. Why not use swodes, saw?"

"Very good. Swords, then. Here, waiter! a couple of rapiers."

The command was quickly executed. Each of the antagonists seized upon a weapon, and the crowd fell back. The Londoner, though a dandy, was no coward. He took his weapon with perfect *sang froid*, and bent it once or twice, as if to try its pliability. He was a fine fencer. I could tell that by the manner in which he came to guard.

The encounter began. The antagonists were cool and collected. Both were silent, but each fought with flashing eyes and clinched teeth. I eagerly watch the struggle. I feel anxious for the safety of my friend, though I perceive that he, also, is an excellent swordsman. However, the combat is of short duration. Shortly, the Englishman's weapon is whipped from his hand, and he is at the mercy of his antagonist.

"Now, sir," said St. Pierre, "an apology, or, by heaven! I'll run you through!"

The sharp-pointed weapon was close to the other's breast, and I knew that he would execute his threat, was not his request very quickly complied with.

"Well," said the Londoner, "if aw must apologize, of cawse aw will. Yaw pwadon, saw."

The affair was ended.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOAT-RACE.

A FEW moments before eight o'clock found us aboard the "Sultana," the boat that was to convey us up the river as far as St. Paul.

Yes, I for a time, was going to quit the hum and bustle of civilized life, and exchange it for one of adventure and greater freedom. St. Pierre it was who had persuaded me to

accompany him in one of his journeyings into the "vast, illimitable changing West."

The journey, too, he said, would not be without its profits. He told me that if I invested what capital I had upon such merchandise as fur-traders carry into the Indian country, I could easily double, if not treble, my money. I took his advice, and invested one-half my capital in pocket looking-glasses, knives, beads, etc. St. Pierre was himself a trader, and it was under his guidance that I laid out my money.

My friend was a man of no small means. I knew that he was the possessor of more thousands of dollars than many, perhaps, would have suspected. He had been in the fur-trading business for the last twenty years, and had long ago amassed wealth enough to allow him to retire, did he wish it. But no; the life he was leading offered too many allurements for that.

St. Pierre, at the period I am writing of, was somewhat past forty years of age. He was a tall, powerfully built man, with large dark eyes, long black hair, and beard of a like hue. St. Pierre was unmarried. In his early life he had loved a girl who proved false to him. He never loved again.

I had not been very long on board the boat, and was busily engaged in watching the hurried preparations that were being made upon the wharf, when up drove a fine barouche. Out of it stepped two persons—both young, both elegantly attired. The first was a lady, the second my friend at the breakfast table, the Londoner. The young lady seized the latter's arm, and together they ascended into the saloon.

The time for the departure of the "Sultana" had arrived. The bell tolled, several persons ran down the gangway, which was, a moment later, drawn in. The hawsers were cast loose, and, after a few revolutions of her paddles, the boat had left the wharf, and was beginning to glide rapidly up the Mississippi.

About the same time that the "Sultana" made her start, another boat, equally large, and built for fast running, backed out into the stream. On her paddle-box I read the words, "Henry Hudson." Our own craft was, at that time, one of the fastest boats on the river, being the "crack" boat of the firm to which she belonged. In point of beauty she was unsurpassed.

Her saloon and state rooms were fitted up with the greatest elegance, at a cost to her owners of thousands of dollars.

The "Henry Hudson" belonged to another firm. Though it was acknowledged that this boat was far beneath the "Sultana" in point of beauty, yet it was claimed by many that, in point of speed, the former boat equaled, if not surpassed, the latter. As yet, however, no race had occurred between the two boats, and the matter was therefore doubtful on both sides.

Most of the male passengers on board the "Sultana" were assembled upon the deck. All knew that a race between the two must certainly ensue, and already were bets being made upon the issue. Many were loud in their praises of the Sultana; others equally as loud in theirs of the "Henry Hudson."

"Wal, stranger," said one long, gaunt New Englander, "I've been aboard that 'ar boat, and, I kin tell yew—I kin jest tell yew—what she ar'; she kin jest beat this here boat all to pieces."

"Hold on," said another, "will you bet on that?"

"Of course, stranger."

"How much?"

"Twenty-fi— no, fifty dollars!"

"I'll take your bet."

I turned from the noisy group, and walked to the opposite side of the boat. I held in my hand a small spy-glass, with which I was soon amusing myself by gazing upon the objects on the bank of the river.

"Ha!" I heard a voice exclaim, and felt, at the same time, a hand laid upon my shoulder. I lowered the glass, and turned around. Before that, however, I knew to whom the voice belonged. The peculiar accent with which the "Ha!" was pronounced could not have come from any other lips than those of the Londoner.

"Ma fine fellow," said he, "would yaw be so kind as to lend me yaw glaas faw a moment?"

For a moment I hesitated. The way in which he had treated St. Pierre had made me detest the man. The next moment, however, I eagerly thrust the glass into his hands. He thanked me, and walked off.

In reality, however, it was not to him that I had lent my

glass. While my mind was considering whether I should comply with his request or not, my eyes had chanced to wander toward the taffrail of the boat. I saw seated there the young lady who had accompanied the Londoner on board. It was she, I thought, who wanted the glass. The young man approached his companion, adjusted the glass, and handed it to her. I scanned the female's features closely. In a moment I saw that the two were not man and wife—not even lovers. They were too much alike for that. The girl's nose, hair and complexion were those of her companion. Even an ordinary observer could have seen at a glance that the two were but brother and sister.

Yes, the two, in looks, resemble each other closely. But the expression of their mouths, and their general bearing, are different. The difference between their outward dispositions strikes me at once. One is overbearing and self-conceited—the other dignified, yet kind and unostentatious. She is, moreover, handsome—more than ordinarily so.

By and by her brother leaves her, drawn away from her side by the noisy group who are betting upon the expected boat-race.

His sister is still engaged with the spy-glass. I longed to be introduced to her. Indeed, so strong did the desire seize upon me, that I resolved to do no less than to ask her brother to perform the ceremony, when he returned the glass. The "introduction," however, came sooner, and in a different manner, than I had expected. Accident it was that caused it.

She had grown tired of the glass, and was bringing it down from her eye, when lo! the glass was accidentally hit against the taffrail of the boat, and fell from her hand over the side, and into the Mississippi. The young lady gave an exclamation of combined pity and anger, as she saw the ill-fated spy-glass disappear, and quickly glanced at me, as if to see whether I had noticed the accident. She caught me gazing directly at her. I would have turned my eyes away, and appeared as if I had not been a witness of her—or, rather, *my*—misfortune, but I had not time, so quickly did she glance toward me.

A moment after she stood before me.

"I believe, sir," she said, with that accent peculiar to Londoners, "that that glass I was unfortunate enough to lose

belonged to you. I am sorry that the accident occurred. If there is any way that I can recompense you, I—"

"It is but a trifle," I said, interrupting her. "As to recompensing me—I beg you will mention it no more."

She gave me a slight bow; and then, for a moment, we both were silent. She did not offer to leave me to myself again, but stood watching the noisy group of betters, of which her brother was one.

"My brother," she said, at length, withdrawing her eyes from him, and again turning them upon me, "seems to be getting excited about something or other."

"Yes," I replied. "Perhaps he, like the rest, is betting upon the boat-race."

"Boat-race! What boat-race, sir?"

"Ha!" said I, smiling. "You can not, then, have been very long in America?"

"No," she replied; "hardly a week."

I was about to explain to her the rivalry that existed between the different boats upon an American river, when her brother detached himself from the group of noisy individuals, and approached us.

"Aw!" he said, to his sister. "Yaw've returned the young fellow's glass, I suppose. Come with me. We're to have some spawt, soon."

He seized the young lady's arm; and she, after a parting salute, followed him toward the taffrail of the boat.

My friend, St. Pierre, approached me.

"Well, Montgomery," he said, in his cordial tone of voice, "have you been betting upon the race?"

"No," I replied. "Have you?"

"Certainly. I have staked a hundred dollars against the 'Henry Hudson.'"

Together we walked to the opposite side of the boat. By this time the race between the two boats had already begun. The safety-valve of the "Sultana" denoted that she was under a high pressure of steam. Notwithstanding that, her fire men were using all their efforts to raise the steam still higher.

"Raise her up, boys!" shouted the first engineer. "Her boilers are in good condition."

Aboard the "Henry Hudson" we could perceive the same

scene was being enacted. The two boats were quite close to each other, and, as yet, neither had seemed to gain a foot. Now, however, we aboard the "Sultana" saw that our boat was rapidly beginning to leave the other behind.

"Whoop! Here we go at last!" shouted a voice.

"Good-by, old tub!" exclaimed a second.

"Two to one on—"

But the mirth and merriment aboard the "Sultana" is suddenly hushed. We saw a dense cloud of vapor ascend from the rival boat, then came a terrific crash, followed quickly after by a wail of terror and despair! At once we divined the cause. The shattered sides of the "Henry Hudson" told the tale. Her boiler had exploded! Blue wreaths of smoke were beginning to curl up. We saw that she was on fire. Besides that, she was fast sinking. The captain of the "Sultana" ordered her boats to be lowered, and to bring off those of the "Henry Hudson's" passengers who could not swim. Of course, the "Sultana's" paddles had been reversed, and she was slowly backing toward the ill-fated vessel.

Those aboard the "Henry Hudson" who could swim, had leaped into the river, and were endeavoring to reach the "Sultana." A few succeeded. The rest the swift current soon bore down-stream.

I will not endeavor to narrate the strenuous efforts of all those who were able to assist in saving all that could be saved. Of course, a few of her passengers perished. To save all was an utter impossibility.

The "Henry Hudson" was ablaze from stem to stern when she sunk; and it was not without a sigh of regret that I saw the waters close over her. But scarcely had she disappeared, before the "Sultana's" paddles once more began to revolve, and we were again on our way to St. Paul.

CHAPTER III.

NORTH-WEST "SETTLEMENTS."

ALONG with a number of others, St. Pierre and myself at last debarked for the—at that time—small town of St. Paul.

It was not St. Pierre's intention to remain here, but to carry our goods still further up the Mississippi. The best market, he said, would be Narcene, a small trading-post some fifty miles below Lake Itasca.

The journey to Narcene, my friend informed me, would have to be made with wagons, oxen and horses. The road lay through the vast wilderness. Accordingly, I spent one half the day in the purchasing of ox-teams, and bargaining with teamsters. This being concluded, I was at liberty to enjoy myself as best I could.

St. Paul at that period presented a far different aspect from the present. Its few inhabitants consisted of retired trappers, refugees, hunters and traders. It abounded in gaming-hells, whisky-shops, and one or two miserable stores that were there, were doing a very profitable business.

But I knew that, ere long, the scene would change. I could not but think that one day St. Paul was surely destined to become one of the most beautiful and populous cities in the West. St. Pierre approached me.

"Come, Montgomery," he said, "I'll take you around, and show you the sights."

I followed my friend into a small, mean-looking log-cabin, outside of which was a dilapidated sign-board, upon which was chalked "Trappers' Home, by Mike Dolan." Inside the "saloon" was a long plank, which, of course, answered for the "bar." Behind it stood, on a shelf, three or four whisky kegs, and one or two small tin cups. This was the owner's entire stock. The barkeeper himself was a tall, lantern-jawed son of Erin.

At the further end of the room, seated on a wooden bench,

were a number of individuals whose appearance arrested my attention at once. One or two were clad in old, dilapidated costumes of civilized life, the remainder in the garb at that time peculiar to the frontier. Several grasped in their hands a long rifle, and in their belts each carried a hunting-knife and one or two pistols. The sight is new to me, and I watch their proceedings with no small amount of curiosity. They one and all seem to know St. Pierre, for upon his entrance they each greet him with loud hurrahs, and various other loud demonstrations of friendship.

"Whoop! Geehosephat!" exclaimed one, rising from his seat. "How ar' ye, old hoss? Don't yer know me? My name's Josh Stiltes! Yes sir-r-ree. I ken outswim, outshoot, an' outlick any other Salt River roarer that ever drew a bead!"

"Hold on thar, old greaser!" exclaimed a second, springing fiercely up. "Do 'ee know what this child's name ar'? Hes name ar' Bill Hawkins, it ar'. Yer says yer ken outshoot me, does yer? Pish! 'Ee durned fool!"

The former speaker replied by knocking the latter down. This was the signal for a general set-to. The rest of the trappers sprung up, and all set to work, some taking one side, some another. The excited trappers at first fought with their fists, but soon their pistols were drawn, and several shots fired.

When the fight had first commenced, St. Pierre had been standing in the very midst of the combatants. He quickly fell back, and came and stood by my side. We would gladly have left the disgraceful scene, had it been possible. But it was not. A mob, attracted by the pistol-shots, had crowded into the saloon, and barricaded the door. Escape just then was thus shut off, and imitating the example of St. Pierre, and one or two others, I drew forth a six-barreled Colt revolver.

Presently, one of those whom I had noticed in the room when I first entered, approached us, and exclaimed in a loud voice, pointing at St. Pierre:

"Here's the feller as raised the row!"

"Liar!" ejaculated St. Pierre, turning savagely upon him. "How did I raise the row? What had I to do with it? If you don't take back those words, I'll blow your cursed brains out!"

St. Pierre cocked his revolver, and aimed it full at the rascal's head. He was not a trapper, I saw, but a miserable half-breed. In fact, he was one of the very fellows whom I had just previously engaged to drive my goods to Narcene.

Just then, some one behind our backs threw up St. Pierre's arm, causing the weapon he held in his hand to go off. Turning quickly around, I saw to whom the outstretched arm belonged. Without a single moment's hesitation, I raised my revolver and fired. The fellow fell back, not dead, but with a broken shoulder-blade.

Again I cocked my weapon, expecting that I should be compelled to use it again, in a second or two. He who had been the cause of the fresh trouble had fallen back among the crowd, and was not to be seen. My firing the shot had directed St. Pierre's attention away from him.

Fierce looks and frowns greeted us on every side. The wounded miscreant's friends would gladly have punished us, but, for some reason or other, they seemed loth to begin. We, too, were not without our friends. Several had thrown themselves alongside St. Pierre and myself, with pistols cocked and ready. At that time the deadly revolver was a weapon but little known. As far as I could see, St. Pierre and I were the only ones in the room who had possession of one. The opposing party, too, had drawn their weapons; and the scene was thrilling in the extreme.

"Gentlemen," said St. Pierre. "If there is any one among you who would like to settle this matter with me, let him step forward."

"Why with you?" asked some one in the crowd.

"Because, if we all fight, there will be too much bloodshed. Two of us can settle the matter quite as well."

For a moment there was a profound silence. Desperadoes as many that were there were, they were not willing to spill their blood, if it could be possibly avoided. After a short hesitation, one of their number, a fellow with a low, hang-dog expression, stepped forward.

"Here's yer feller," he said, with an air of braggadocio.

"Indeed," said St. Pierre, surveying him contemptuously. "Well, sir, please to step outside and we'll settle the affair in the open air. Make way there!"

The crowd now made a rush for the open air. I quickly followed. I was anxious to see how the affair would end.

I had not long to wait.

The two antagonists stood twenty yards from each other. Both had their backs toward each other, and at a given signal they were to turn and fire. All this was arranged in less time than it takes to narrate it.

But the signal that had been agreed upon never came. It would have come, doubtless, but Fate willed it that the signal for St. Pierre to fire should be an unexpected one. The two men had but taken their places, when he who had taken up the cause of him whom I had wounded, wheeled suddenly round, brought up his pistol, and fired at St. Pierre's back. Thank heaven, in his hurry, the miscreant missed his aim. My friend remained unhurt. Quick as lightning he turned, and the next moment the villain who had thus attempted to take his life lay upon the ground. St. Pierre's bullet had pierced his heart.

The affair was ended. The dead man was a notorious bully and cut-throat; and many there were, even among his friends, who were glad that his existence was thus terminated.

It was now sunset.

St. Pierre informed me that we would start for Narcene at sunrise on the morrow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRIARIE VAGABONDS.

THE following morning, shortly after daylight, the last wagon composing our train left the town. This was guarded by a few men, of whom I was one.

The train numbered some twenty-five wagons, and nearly—in all—one hundred men. I could see the vanguard of our little army far to the front. There were also a few women among our number. With but one exception, these were the wives and daughters of the pioneers. The one exception was the sister of the Londoner.

"What object brings her out here?" I questioned myself.

She rode a small white horse, and kept continually by the side of her brother, who was himself mounted upon one of the largest bay mares that was to be bought in St. Paul. His costume now consisted of an entire suit of brown velvet, made after the fashion prevailing among English *sportsmen*. That very morning he had donned a clean, white shirt; and as he had no intention of letting his small and white hands become rough and brown by exposure, he wore a pair of green kid gloves!

Like St. Pierre, I had exchanged my *city* dress for one far more suited to the wilderness—an entire suit of buckskin. My arms and accouterments consisted of a rifle, powder-flask, bullet-pouch, a pair of revolvers and a Bowie. I was thus armed to the very teeth, and as I rode along, the novelty of the situation, aided by the keen morning air, made my spirits buoyant, and I felt as if I feared nothing.

We entered the heavy timber. At that time, nothing could excel the grandeur of a Minnesota forest. Its tall trees of oak and maple, overtowering those of the wild crab, cherry and plum species, struck me at once with their beauty.

The first day of our journey we kept on without "nooning." All felt anxious to proceed rapidly as possible. Toward sundown we debouched from the forest, and entered a prairie—covered as far as the eye could stretch with flowers of every form and hue.

It was determined that we should halt here for the night. The wagons were placed in a kind of circle, and in the center fires were kindled, over which were soon roasting huge chunks of dried venison.

When our meal was ended we rolled ourselves in our blankets and slept.

The next day our road lay over the prairie. Toward noon we made a short halt, then continued our march. Shortly after sundown, away to the west, we sighted a stream of water, looking like a silver thread. It was the St. Peter's. Just beyond it lay another object that attracted our attention—another forest.

They were too far distant to be reached that night, so we again prepared at once to pass the night where we

were. As I was one of the number detailed for picket duty that night, I took my place. I had not occupied it long when some one detached himself from the groups at the fires, and approached me. It was St. Pierre. His visit pleased me. For the last two days I had but a very few words with my friend, his time being occupied in watching over the safety of the party and their goods in general.

"Well, Harry," said he, grasping my hand, "how does prairie life agree with you?"

"Capitally!" I answered. "I feel altogether like a new man."

"Ha!" he exclaimed, smiling, "I see you are already affected with the prairie fever. To-morrow night," continued he, "if all be well, we shall be in New Salem."

At this moment a third person approached the spot. It was Bill Price, one of the trappers who formed part of our party.

"Captain," said he, addressing St. Pierre, "do 'ee see them ar' dark spots 'way out on the prairer?"

The trapper raised his arm and pointed toward the southwest. St. Pierre and I both looked in the direction indicated, and perceived a number of dark objects far out on the prairie. The moon had risen, and was at its full, and we were able to distinguish the objects with ease. We knew what they were at a glance. *They were Indians!*

They were mounted, and each moment we were able to distinguish them with greater ease. They were not coming directly toward us as when we first saw them, but we doubted not their course would be soon changed.

"Indians!" St. Pierre had exclaimed, when first his eye had fallen upon them. "Mounted, too! It can not be—no, it can not be that they have dug up the hatchet, Bill, eh?"

"Waugh! cap'n, thet ar' hard to say. Shouldn't be surprised, though. Thet ar' Sioux chief, Bloody Arm, ar' a big enemy to white folks. I ked 'a' shot him onct, when he war a young chief, an' I'm sorry I didn't."

"But they do not appear to be coming toward us," said my friend, in an anxious tone. "Perhaps it's but a hunting-party."

"Mebbe, cap'n," said the trapper. "As yit, it's hard to say."

For full ten minutes we stood silently watching them. Their horses were going at a full gallop. There must at least have been two hundred, if not more. We could hear the noise the hoofs of the horses made, as they struck the firm prairie, distinctly. It reached the practiced ears of the rest of the trappers in the camp, and they awoke on the instant.

Suddenly the savages came to a full stop. But it was only for a moment. Their horses were again set in motion, and this time they galloped directly toward us.

There was not a second of time to be lost.

They would be upon us in a twinkling, and if they were upon the war-path—

“Hurry!” shouted St. Pierre. “Let us be well prepared to meet them!”

By this time the whole of our little army was aroused. Each man at once perceived the danger, and was not slow to prepare to defend himself. The female portion were placed inside one of the covered wagons, and one of the teamsters had orders to let not one of them escape from it. The injunction was scarcely necessary. They knew well the danger they ran, if they exposed themselves; and therefore sat silently awaiting what should happen.

After ascertaining that both my revolvers and my rifle were loaded, I silently watched the proceedings of the rest. Presently I was aware of the presence of the Londoner, who said, in a half-frightened tone:

“Ah! ma deaw young fellow, dawn't you think we're in faw a fight?”

“Really, sir,” I answered, “I'm quite unable to inform you. At any rate, we shall know before long. I hope you're not afraid?”

“Afraid! deaw, no! But you see I haven't a rifle; only a shot gun.”

In spite of the anxiety I felt, I could not refrain from smiling at the man's words. The idea of bringing a shot-gun into the wilderness was to me a new one. He saw the smile on my face, for he turned quickly away, and was soon lost among a group of men a short distance from us. As soon as he was gone, those who were standing near me, and had heard the Englishman's remark, burst into a loud laugh.

"Waugh!" exclaimed one, "he's a Britisher, ain't he?"

"'Ees," said another.

"I suppose he's gone arter his gun. Ef we hev any fi't'n to do, we will hev an opportunity o' seein' how a shot-gun an' Injuns agree, though I'll allow this hyar child hes never seed it, as yet."

I turned from the group, and directed my gaze once more out upon the prairie.

The savages were by this time less than a mile distant, and still coming over the prairie at a full gallop. In spite of my apprehensions, I could not refrain from admiring the appearance they made. The scene was wild in the extreme, and I stood gazing upon it as if fascinated.

They are now quite close to us. They have checked the speed of their animals, and approach us no faster than a walk. Presently they halt altogether; and one of their number, who seems to be the chief, rides a few paces to the front of the rest, and calls out, in tolerably good English:

"We are friends!"

At first, on our side, there is no reply.

"I guess thar all right, cap'n," said one of the trappers, to St. Pierre. "You see they're not in thar paint."

"Friends!" said St. Pierre, in a loud tone. "Why do you say that? Did we give you any reason to suppose we thought you were enemies?"

"No," was the reply. "But we saw that you were all armed."

"Is it not better to be always ready?" demanded St. Pierre.

There was no reply, and St. Pierre continued: "No, the red-man and the pale-face war no more. The hatchet has been buried forever. Red-man, do I not speak the truth?"

A general murmur of assent went through the Indian ranks.

We began to breathe more freely. Yes, the Indians were our friends, a few of us thought, and these began to blame themselves for having suspicioned them. But others there were who knew that "all was not gold that glittered," and that beneath the fair exterior of the savages lay some hidden motive.

"Who is thar chief?" asked one of the trappers. "Ain't it Gray Eagle?"

"'Ees."

"Waugh! I thort so. He ar' cunnin' as a fox, he ar'. I've met him afore. Hyar comes old foxy hisself."

The Sioux chief again detached himself from his warriors, and rode a few paces forward.

"Pale-faces," he said, "we have no fire-water. We must have some. Our white brethren have plenty."

"No, Chepah Boyah," said St. Pierre, calling the chief by his Indian name, "we have no fire-water. You mistake us. We are not whisky-traders."

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, being angered at the refusal. "Does our white brother speak the truth?"

"He does," said St. Pierre, in a voice of thunder, for now he saw, as did several others, that it was the design of the savages to draw them into a quarrel. These were not the sort of men that are slow to perceive an approaching danger. Rifles were cocked, and held ready for immediate use. The chief, knowing that it was possible to be the first mark for one of his adversaries' rifles, dropped back among his warriors. He was spokesman no longer.

"Waugh! cap'n," said one of the trappers, to St. Pierre, "we mout as well begin, I reckon. We're in fur it, and ef we begin we'll hev the advantage on our side."

"True," said St. Pierre. "But we will not be the first to commence the attack. But see! What does that mean?"

A sudden and unexpected movement was observed among the savages. We could hear them utter a few quick syllables—not understood by us—then they wheeled their horses round, and set off at a gallop over the prairie. The cause was soon explained.

"Waugh! Lookee yonder!" said one of the trappers, pointing to the south-west, the very quarter from whence the savages had come. We looked. An unexpected and welcome sight met our gaze. Not one of us but what now knew the reason of the sudden departure of our foes. At a glance we recognized them as being *friends*—they were cavalry. As our attention had been occupied by the Sioux, we did not perceive their approach until they were not more than half a mile

distant. They were coming at the top of their horses' speed, their sabers flashing with the light of the moon.

When within fifty yards of us, they halted.

One of them, whose uniform informed me that he was the captain, called out :

"Has any thing gone wrong?"

"No," said St. Pierre; "but the red-skins acted rather suspicious."

"Yes; it is supposed that they intend commencing hostilities again. Their chief, Bloody Arm, has ordered a general gathering of all the tribes. So you had better be on your guard. Come, boys, forward!"

The captain dug his spurs into his horse's sides, then rode rapidly off, followed by his band. They took the direction the savages had done, and who were still within sight. We breathed freely once more. For that night, at least, it was not likely that we would be disturbed again. However, St. Pierre judged it best to double the guard, which was accordingly done. Those who were not on guard took to their blankets, and in a short space of time silence reigned throughout the camp once more.

CHAPTER V.

A FRONTIER DANCE.

THE following day, precisely at sundown, after a long and wearisome march, we reached New Salem, a small village situated on the St. Peter's.

The village consisted of some thirty cabins, a small church, and a fort, garrisoned with a detachment of troops.

As I have said before, it was sunset.

Our arrival was the cause of great excitement. The inhabitants flocked forth to meet us, and we were received with many a cheer and hurrah. Poor settlers! Cut aloof from the rest of the world, a fresh arrival was ever looked forward to with joyful anticipation. Some of the settlers found friends among our number, and these were received with many a caress and

expression of endearment. My eye happened to light upon the Englishman and his sister. They had both dismounted, and stood waiting by their horses as if expecting some one to meet them. The lady looked pale and anxious; caused, perhaps, by the excitement of the night before.

Most of the inhabitants were eying them with no small amount of curiosity. The rich dress the young lady wore, and the singular appearance her brother presented, caused more than one remark to pass round—some expressive of admiration, others of contempt. Some of the soldiers had left the fort, and as most of them had seen a "dandy" before, it was amusing to hear the remarks made, in an undertone, however. Presently I saw an elderly man approach them, and shortly afterward conduct them off to one of the cabins.

By this time the trappers and traders had dismounted, and in the clearing several fires had been kindled. The oxen and horses were satisfying their hunger upon the luxuriant grass at some distance off. Huge joints of meat were soon sputtering over the fire, sharpening still more our keen appetites.

I had just finished picketing my horse, and was about to commence making preparations for cooking my supper, when St. Pierre came up.

"Come, Montgomery, we sup at the fort."

We passed through the stockade, and entered the fort. We were met by a man whose bearing at once proclaimed him to have been a soldier, though now his costume was a counterpart of my own—that of a hunter and trader. St. Pierre introduced him. His name, I was informed, was Major Maurice. By birth he was a Frenchman, but when a mere boy his parents emigrated to Canada, and, with the exception of ten years spent in the army, his life had been passed in the wilderness. He was commander of the fort, and the chief man of the settlement.

After passing through a short passage, we emerged into a large, roughly-furnished room. The sole furniture consisted of a table, one or two rough chairs, and as many benches. At the further end was a rude fire-place.

Upon the table a rude repast had been spread, and after an apology from our host, we were invited to be seated.

"This room," said St. Pierre, during our meal, "has been

the silent witness of more than one cruel deed. It was here that the celebrated chief, Long Arm, was killed."

"Indeed," said I, my curiosity excited. "That alone would have been sufficient to have made it a curiosity."

"It would," said my friend; "but other incidents have taken place which, if but known to the world, would make it still more so. My friend here, the major, could relate to you an adventure which has never been surpassed. Is it not so, major?"

The major smiled, but made no reply.

"How did it happen?" asked I, curious to hear the story. "If it is not asking too much, major, I should very much like to hear an account of it."

"I will relate it with pleasure," replied the major. "This fort was built several years before any settler appeared on the scene, and, at the time I speak of, was garrisoned by some two dozen men. The red-skins were then—or pretended to be—on good terms with us. However, that did not prevent our keeping a constant lookout for any unexpected foe. I had several scouts in my employ, and was pretty well informed of all the red-skins' movements."

"One night—it must have been midnight—I was suddenly awakened by a musket-shot. This was quickly followed by another, and then another; then came a wild yell. Well knowing what they both meant, I was not slow in springing from my bed and approaching one of the loop-holes. Looking through, I saw the savages just as they rushed into the stockade. As I knew that it was now impossible to prevent their entering the fort, I at once commenced to barricade the door of my own room."

"This done, I stood with my rifle cocked and ready, listening to the sounds without. It was awful! An occasional shot would echo through the fort, then would be followed by a piercing shriek, as the tomahawk descended upon some unfortunate soldier's head. After some time, silence followed. Not even the slightest murmur could have been heard. I was just beginning to hope that I had been forgotten, when suddenly my ears were assailed by two fresh sounds—each terrible in itself. One was the soft, cat-like tread of the Sioux, as they approached the door, the other was the crackling made by the flames. I knew the fort was on fire."

"Presently a rush was made for the door. It did not yield. I had barricaded it too firmly for that. It caused the redskins to give vent to a yell of rage. Another attempt to break through, and resulted as before. I kept perfectly silent, but putting every thought to work at planning how I should escape. There seemed but one way, and that was by chopping a hole in, and escaping through the roof. But would I have time? That was the next question. The danger was appalling. I could tell by the noise that the flames were spreading more rapidly each moment. Soon they would drive the savages from their position, and the latter were bent upon my capture before the common enemy had time to approach them. Already several of them were using their tomahawks upon the door.

"I saw from the loop-holes that the inclosure below was clear. It would soon rain, for the lightning was flashing, and thunder sounded through the woods with awful solemnity. I did not stay long looking outside; but, standing upon a huge chest the room contained, drew forth my hatchet and commenced hacking at the roof. I chopped away with the energy of a madman, for I knew that life depended upon my efforts. I was nearly frantic, for I could tell by the noise that the door was rapidly yielding to the blows. Never, I believe, has any one worked with more energy than did I.

"At last I was rewarded by seeing a hole sufficiently large to allow me to escape through it. I was about to do so, when I remembered that there were no means by which I could reach the ground, unless by jumping. Accordingly, I descended into the room, and securing a lasso I had there, fastened it to one of the rafters, and threw the other end through the opening in the roof, in such a manner that I knew it would fall on the ground. At that moment the door gave way, and the blaze behind them enabled me to see my enemies plainly. I knew they would be inside in a moment. Just then my eye happened to light upon a small keg, standing in one of the corners. A sudden idea seized me. I ran to the keg, and quick as lightning smashed in one of the ends. *It was filled with gunpowder!* Picking up the keg, I hurled it with all my strength through the doorway. It struck one of the savages in the face, and fell not a foot from the flames.

"I mounted the chest once more, pulled myself through the opening, and slid quickly down the lasso. By this time it was raining heavily, and the wind blew with terrific violence. I touched the ground and heard the explosion simultaneously. I knew more than one of my enemies would suffer. I afterward learned that, save one, all perished. I was soon under the shelter of the woods, and before morning had reached the nearest settlement. I was the only one in the fort that escaped.

"This room," continued our host, "was the only one that was not destroyed. The explosion scattered, and the rain put the flames out. But you can see how near they were to it. I looked toward the door. The posts were charred and rotten. I saw, too, the evidences of the opening that had been made in the roof; now patched over with layers of thin boards. Supper ended, St. Pierre informed me that there was to be a dance given that evening, and asked if I should like to attend it. A backwoods dance would be to me a novelty; nothing could have pleased me better; and I informed my friend of the fact.

As some time would elapse before the dance commenced, we three left the fort, and wandered to the river's side, there to while away the time with an Havana. It was now dusk, and nature never appeared more charming to me than it did then.

The St. Peter's glided on with a surface smooth as glass. Away down the stream could be heard the "caw-caw" of the night-hawks, and the whistle of the whippowil. A flock of wild geese would occasionally pass over our heads, far above, and on the way to Lake Itasca, the great summer resort of these migratory fowls.

The village itself presented a curious sight. The circle of wagons, the drove of oxen and horses quietly feeding on the rich grass, the children playing in front of the cabin doors—all tended to raise up feelings of composure and carelessness as to future prosperity. What cared I at that moment for wealth? Nothing. I felt that in a dress of buckskin, and in the habitation of one of those comfortable-looking log-cabins, I could be far happier than if the wearer of a fashionable suit of broadcloth, and living in some aristocratic avenue. At least, such were my reflections at that time. I noticed,

too, among the crowd of villagers, trappers and traders, others of a different appearance. They were Indians—Sioux. I counted more than a dozen of them, walking about with their colored blankets drawn tightly around them, and watching with eager interest the proceedings of those about them. As I have said before, they were Sioux; and a more ferocious-looking set I never set eyes on. As a class, the Sioux are the most forbidding tribe living. The same expression—combined avarice, cruelty and licentiousness—characterizes them all.

They were not the only observers. I could plainly see that more than one trapper was keeping a sharp lookout for them from beneath his thick, shaggy eyebrows.

At last we heard a few violin notes proceed from one of the cabins, and St. Pierre informed me that the dance was about to commence. We left the major on the banks, he having begged us to excuse him, as he was never given to dancing. My friend, knowing his obstinate nature, did not urge him; so we entered the dancing-room together.

It was not a very spacious one, although the largest the village could afford. It belonged to him whom I had seen take charge of the Englishman and his sister. At the further end was a couple of high stools, upon which sat two violinists. This was the orchestra.

I next surveyed the dancers—especially the female portion. These, as near as I was able to judge, numbered from twelve to fourteen. Many of them were handsome. Their graceful forms were enveloped in robes of many and gaudy colors. Their feet were encased in fawnskin moccasins, ornamented with beads and stained porcupine quills. The hollow eye, the hectic cheek, were absent. Their dark eyes flashed brilliantly with health and merriment. The violinists began a waltz—the Natalee. With what relish did the dancers participate in it! How different from a city dance!

On entering the room, along with St. Pierre, I had seated myself on one of the several wooden benches that had been placed round the room, near the door. Presently my attention was attracted by the arrival of the Londoner. Hanging on his arm was a young and beautiful girl—beautiful as Hebe! I was fascinated at a single glance

When they entered it was one of the intervals between the dances. The next was a schottische. When the "orchestra" struck up, I saw them pair off, and commence circling the room. Who could she be? I knew not whom to ask. St. Pierre had left me a few moments previously, and I occupied the bench alone. I looked around in hopes of finding some one else. My glance happened to turn toward one of the windows—open, for the night was warm. Eagerly watching the proceedings of those inside were several of the Sioux whom I had seen a short time previously. Their dark eyes fairly rolled in their sockets as they gloated upon the scene before them. For some unaccountable reason, I felt ill at ease. A kind of presentiment of some coming evil was upon me. I remembered the words of the captain of the cavalry, spoken the night before.

As I looked into those satanic visages, I felt sure that a storm was brewing somewhere. When and where it would commence, I knew not. But I managed to withdraw my eyes from them at last, and look once more at what was transpiring within.

CHAPTER VI.

MINNIE.

WHERE was the Londoner's sister? She had not made her appearance. Probably such a gathering was not to her tastes.

As for her brother, he was seated—the schottische was ended—by the side of his partner, as if waiting for the commencement of another waltz. I had come to the ball with the intention of being a mere looker-on, but the entrance of *her*—whose name I was yet unacquainted with—changed my resolution. I resolved to seek an introduction, and trust the rest—the winning of her good opinion—to my appearance and manners. I might have some difficulties to overcome. The Londoner, it was plain, intended to monopolize her the whole evening; and this would have to be overcome, perhaps. I looked at his costume, then at my own. He was attired in

black pants and dress-coat, and wore a white vest. In fact, he was dressed precisely as he would have been if he had been going to attend a ball in the metropolis. Mine was a suit of buckskin, new and clean, and I fancied I did not look any the less elegant in them.

I saw my friend seated beside a charming forest nymph at the further end of the room, close to the "orchestra." I approached him, and drew him to one side a moment.

"St. Pierre," said I, "who is that young girl seated by our London acquaintance?"

"That!" exclaimed he. "Why, Harry, have you fallen in love with her. Ha! ha!"

"Come, St. Pierre, who is she?"

"Well, my boy, seeing you seem so very anxious to know, I will tell you. Her name is Minnie Lorraine. The Indians call her by a very pretty name—'Silver Leaf.' But come, perhaps you would like to know her? Shall I introduce you?"

"That's exactly what I'm after," said I.

My friend smiled, and walked away, bidding me follow him. I did so.

Two minutes more, and the introduction was through with. Though bred in the wilderness, I perceived, by the way in which the young girl conducted herself, that she knew what good manners were. I asked if she was engaged for the next waltz. She did not reply, but cast a quick, inquiring glance at the Londoner, still by her side. Her companion answered for her.

"Ah! deaw me; aw believe we're engaged ourselves."

I bowed, and was beginning to move off, when the young girl said, in a quick tone:

"The next one, then."

Hurrah! I had won! I gave her a look—expressive of pleasure and gratification—and another bow, then moved away, until the time should come for me to claim her for my partner. The next dance was a polka. In the impatient mood I was in, it seemed as if it would never end. But at last the music ceased, and after allowing the young girl time to recruit herself somewhat, I again approached her. The Londoner—whose name was, I had learned, Tompkins—still occupied a seat at her right hand. At her left there was a

vacant one ; and, without further ceremony, I took it. I looked to see if she felt displeased at this act of presumption on my part. Her eyes met mine. They looked at me for a second, then were allowed to wander elsewhere. But in that second of time I had seen enough to convince me that I was not regarded with disfavor.

Once more the music commences. This time it is to be a waltz. With my arm partly encircling my lovely partner's waist, I am soon whirling round the room unconscious now of but one being. Her small moccasined feet tread softly as those of a gazelle. Her hair, black as jet, falls upon her shoulders in thick curls. Her face is of a type but rarely witnessed. Her eyes are of a deep blue, her mouth and nose finely chiseled, her eyebrows finely arched, and her complexion rather inclined to be dark.

I felt as if I could dance on, on, and never tire, with her for a partner. But alas ! again the music ceased, and I was forced to reluctantly conduct her to a seat. Tompkins was not there. This pleased me, for it gave me an opportunity to chat a short time with my lovely companion.

"I see Mr. Tompkins has disappeared," were my first words. "Is he a friend of yours ?" I ventured to inquire.

"Of mine ?" said she, with a light laugh. "Oh ! no. He is but an old acquaintance of papa's, who has come out here to purchase land, I believe."

We were about to continue the conversation, when to my vexation the Londoner approached.

Not wishing to appear discourteous before the young girl, I rose from my seat ; and, after wishing her good-evening, left the room. I had no desire to stay there any longer. She was the only one I cared to dance with, though there were other faces—many of them—that were beautiful, as well as hers. When I reached the door, I looked backward over my shoulder. Minnie was looking at me, in her eyes an expression I was at that time unable to fathom. The Londoner noticed the look, and I saw—or fancied I saw—an expression of hatred and jealousy upon his features. I looked to see if St. Pierre was in the room. He was not.

I passed into the open air. A short distance from the door quite a crowd had gathered. They were mostly trappers,

and were conversing in a low undertone. St. Pierre, I saw was one of the number.

"Waugh! boyees, I'll stake this old rifle o' mine 'gainst a beaver's hide thet they'll be hyar afore mornin'. When Injuns is on the war-path they ain't slow, I reckon."

The speaker was the trapper, Bill Price.

"But they've thar squaws along, eh?" said another voice.

"'Ees; I see'd 'em myself."

"What is the matter?" I inquired, approaching my friend.

"Why," said he, in an anxious tone, "it is reported that one or two hundred Sioux are coming this way; and I fear another outbreak is brewing among them. In that case," he continued, "it will not be safe for us to start for Narcene. We shall have to stay where we are for a few days, I fear."

"Wal," said the trapper, Price, in reply to the last speaker, "because they've got thar squaws along don't count fur much. What could be more easier than fur 'em to drop the weemin in the woods, when they begin the fight?"

"True," replied one who had up to this time taken no part in the conversation, and whose appearance showed him to be a personage of no small account in the village; "the thing was done at Detroit, and is quite as likely to occur here."

The speaker was, I afterward learned, Pierre Lorraine—father of Minnie.

"You think, then, Bill," asked Major Maurice, who was among the crowd, "that the Indians will hold a conference with us before they commence hostilities?"

"Surer'n shootin', major."

"Well, then," continued the major, "it will be better to send at once to Fort Snelling for a small detachment of soldiers. The present garrison is hardly strong enough for any very formidable uprising."

"Waugh! an' ef yer takes this child's advice," said Price, "ye'll hev the hull of the villagers take up quarters in the fort at once. As I said afore, I don't think thar's any reason to be scared fur a day or two yit, but it's always best, I reckon, to be on the safe side. At any rate, the red-skins 'll be hyar afore mornin', whether they intend to fight at onect, or not."

Injins allurs travel on a moonlight night, ef their business is important."

"Right, Bill," said Lorraine; "your advice shall be acted upon."

CHAPTER VII.

SCARLET MOCCASIN.

AND now commenced a scene of noise and confusion. Orders were sent to the villagers that it would be the safest plan for them to at once quit their cabins, and take up their quarters in the fort, until the supposed storm had blown over. One of the trappers, selected on account of his superior skill and cunning, had been dispatched by the major to Fort Snelling to acquaint the commander there how matters stood, and at the same time solicit another detachment of troops.

It was getting late, all of the villagers, with the exception of those at the dance, having gone to their beds. But these were soon aroused, and commenced hurrying toward the fort, taking only what they would need during their imprisonment with them.

The noise caused those participating in the dance to come outside and learn the cause. They knew in a single moment, and in the space of five minutes not one remained in the room, even the violinists having decamped. Among the last to leave was Tompkins and his partner—the lovely Minnie. I saw her face plainly, as she passed, and her look had a kind of despondency about it that I knew not what to attribute it to. She passed without seeing me. I was standing in the shadow of the building. To my joy, they had not proceeded far when I saw Lorraine approach them. He uttered a few words to the Londoner, then led his daughter toward the fort. I watched them until they disappeared—watched *her* at least.

Our horses and oxen were driven within the stockade. As for the wagons, they would have to remain where they were. This was any thing but gratifying, for should the Indians

attack us, our goods would be destroyed at once. I mentioned this fact to my friend, and he smilingly replied that in such a case our journey would be useless.

I thought, though I did not say so, far differently. True, I might be a loser by the expedition, in one sense, but in another, if the resolve I had made succeeded, I would take back with me that which I could value more than all the wealth of the Indies—the flower of the forest—the lovely Silver Leaf. *Silver Leaf!* I did not wonder that the red-men called her that!

At last the noise and confusion were over. The villagers were all within the fort, those that remained outside being hunters and trappers, besides a few traders. I, too, might have entered the fort, but I knew that to sleep would be an impossibility. Besides that, there was another object I had in remaining awake. Several of the trappers—Bill Price among the number—were going to meet the coming Sioux, and keep a close watch on all their movements. Of course they would take care to keep out of sight, and should the Indians betray any feeling of hostility, it would be reported at the fort as soon as possible.

“Waugh!” said one of the trappers, as they prepared to start, “it’s no use fur the hull lot o’ us to keep in a clump. It’s best to sep’rate, sez I.”

“Right, boyee. I cottons to you. We can’t miss ’em then.”

I was ever fond of adventure. It has always been with me a second nature. I asked the trapper, Bill, if he had any objections to my accompanying him. He replied that he had none; on the contrary, he seemed pleased at the question, and intimated that he would show me “suthin’ o’ a little wood craft.”

I had left my rifle in the fort, in the room occupied by the major. Bidding the trapper wait for me, I ran to fetch it; and in less than five minutes I stood beside him again. We plunged into the forest, our course lying toward the northwest. This, my companion informed me, was the point from which we might expect the Sioux to appear. After a walk of about three miles, we reached a wide stream, some minor tributary of the St. Peter’s. At the point where we approached

it the bank was low and flat. We kept along the bank, which presently commenced to grow higher and higher, until it came to a cliff some fifty feet above the surface of the water. Here, my companion told me, we were to halt.

"Do 'ee see that 'ar bank on t'other side?" asked he, pointing to the other side of the stream.

As the full moon yet shone in a cloudless sky, I could see it distinctly. The bank was low, and covered with clumps of willow. The forest commenced some hundred yards beyond.

"Wal," continued the trapper, "the reds 'll pass along thar."

No better place could have been selected to watch them, I thought. We would be at least fifty feet above them, and, without been seen by them, could count their number and witness their movements plainly. I suggested to my companion, who stood silently leaning on his rifle, the propriety of concealing ourselves in the bushes.

"Waugh! no, young feller," he said, shaking his head; "that 'ud never do."

"Why not?" I inquired.

"'Case it's this child's opeenyun that some o' the reds might take it into thar heads to walk on this side o' the crik. I've seen the thing did afore."

"But I understood you that we *were* to stay here."

"We won't go far away, I reckon. Thar'll be our hidin'-place. We can *caché* thar 'ithout bein' the least bit scared about bein' see'd. I've *cachéd* thar many a time afore this."

As he spoke, the trapper pointed to an immense oak not over ten yards from us. It was the largest tree I had ever seen. A glance upward at its thick foliage showed me that when once astride one of its branches, it would be impossible for any one to discover us, unless they climbed up it.

At a single word from him, we set about ascending the tree. I scrambled up the trunk, clutched hold of one of the lowermost branches, and quickly swung myself astride it. My companion followed. We kept on ascending until nearly thirty feet from the ground, then seated ourselves on one of the largest and most horizontal limbs. Through the foliage we could see the opposite bank plainly; but not our own side; the

foliage below us was too dense for that. We kept perfectly silent. It must have been nearly midnight, when the old trapper's keen senses detected the coming of the reds.

"Hish-s-sh! I heerd the tread o' some varmints," he said, in a low voice. I listened attentively. I thought I could detect a sound—soft and cat-like. It would appear to cease for a moment, then become apparent again. It appeared to be approaching the very tree in which we were concealed. Bill was leaning forward, striving to catch every sound, and with his small, twinkling eye was endeavoring to pierce through some small opening in the dense foliage beneath us.

"It's aither one o' the boyees, or a red-skin," he said, in a whisper.

The author of the noise reached the foot of the tree; and the next moment we heard some one climbing up its trunk. Bill drew forth a hatchet he carried in his belt, and held it in a position ready to strike at an instant's warning. A dark-looking object suddenly became visible among the leaves. It was a human form. A slight exclamation from the trapper caused the other to look up. The face was mostly hidden by a thick, black beard. We needed not a second glance to assure us that its owner was *white*. Quick as Bill saw that face—well known to him—he uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"Geehosephat! Ef that ain't Scarlet Moccasin, my name ain't Bill Price! Kum up hyar," continued the trapper, becoming somewhat excited, "old hoss!"

Scarlet Moccasin! The name caused me to start. I knew well why that name had been given. Around the camp-fire I had often heard the recital of many a wild deed done by the wearer of a moccasin, which, it was reported, was *scarlet*. In those days the frontier was the home of many a cruel desperado. The red-man feared many of them, but none so much as he who wore that dreadful moccasin. No one—white or red—saw him often; his abode was the vast wilderness.

He was not long in ascending to where we were, and in taking a seat beside us. He was a man of not more than thirty years of age, but his stature was almost gigantic. His shoulders were broad, and his arms long and possessed of prodigious strength. His hair was jet black, and fell in masses

upon his shoulders. His beard hid a large part of his features, but what there were remaining were enough to show that at one time he had been extremely handsome. His eyes were large, black as midnight, and had about them a mournful expression. There was something about his whole expression that made me slightly start. I could not shake off the idea that, sometime or other, *I had seen those features before*. Where, I knew not.

I glanced down at his feet, with the intention of looking at his moccasins. I could make out their outline, but not their color. It was too dark for that. I could see, however, that he wore a belt, in which were stuck a couple of pistols, a knife, and, instead of a hatchet, a tomahawk. I had heard that he could use this weapon with far more dexterity than any Sioux.

"Waugh ! boyee," said Bill, after the greetings between them were over with. "Whar hev yer bin this long while ? This child, fur one, thort ye'd gone under surer'n shootin'."

"Not yet, Bill," said the other ; "and what is more, I don't intend to just yet, either. But what brings you here ? You have a friend here, too," he continued, alluding to me. "Come, Bill, can't you introduce me ?"

"In coorse," replied the trapper. "Mister Montgomery"—turning to me—"allow me to interduce you to my friend, Mister Scarlet Moccasin—I'll be dog-goned ef I knows yer other name !"

"It does not matter," said Scarlet Moccasin, turning toward me, at the same time extending his hand. "It is the only name which I have had for the last ten years."

The half sorrowful tone in which this was said caused me to feel a greater interest in him than ever.

Scarlet Moccasin repeated the question he had first put to the trapper.

"Wal, 'ee sees, we kum hyar to watch fur the comin' o' the reds. It's supposed they've dug up the hatchet ag'in. Leastwise, Luke Staghorn sez that a lot o' 'em 'll arrive hyar to-night."

"They will," said the other. "I left them not more than two miles behind—some two hundred of them."

"Had they thar weemin 'long ?"

"Yes, but that makes no difference. The squaws can easily be sent back when they commence to attack the settlements."

"Thar's only two hundred or so altogether, 'ee says?"

"Yes."

"Waugh! the major sent fur another lot o' them sky-blues. Thar's enough in the settlement to lick that many, even ef they war all warriors, 'ithout any help."

"Very true. But, you forget, Bill, that these are only the vanguard of those that are to come. They will not commence hostilities until the arrival of their head chief and his band, Bloody Arm. In order to throw the settlers off their guard, they intend to sign a new treaty. I learned all this some few nights ago, while a spy in their camp. But it's time they were here."

"Waugh! Lookee yonder! Ef this child mistakes not, that's 'em."

The trapper was right. Away on the opposite bank an Indian had suddenly debouched from the woods, quickly followed by another, then another, Indian fashion, until a long string was formed. As soon as the foremost approached within a few feet of the stream, he wheeled half-round, and followed it down. They had not been in sight long, before we became aware that there were some on *our* side of the stream. We could hear the soft, cat-like tread as they passed by, drowned at intervals by some low, guttural voice. We watched until the noise had died away, then prepared to descend. Scarlet Moccasin was the first to do so. He descended with as little noise as possible, and when he reached the ground, took a careful survey of the vicinity before informing us that the coast was clear. I was the next one that reached the ground, followed slowly by the old trapper. Poor fellow! He could no longer ascend and descend a tree with the same agility he once could.

It was now the trapper's intention to return to the fort as quickly as possible, and acquaint the major, if he had not been already informed by one of the other trappers, with the enemy's—enemies they really were—progress. Scarlet Moccasin consented to accompany us, but only as far as the edge of the clearing.

We returned by a different route to that by which we had come, heading directly for the St. Peter's, which we approached about a mile above the village. Scarlet Moccasin accompanied us half a mile further, then refused—in spite of the united entreaties of the trapper and myself—to go any further. He seemed to dread the very name of the village. At parting, I shook his hand, at the same time expressing my regret at being forced to part with him so soon. He smiled.

“We shall meet again, sir,” he said.

Then, without another word, he walked rapidly away.

By this time the moon was close to the horizon. It would shortly be dark. We reached the fort; and after Bill had reported to the major, I left him, and ascended to the parapet. The Indians were not long behind us. Presently we saw them, one after another, enter the clearing, until two hundred of them dotted its surface. Some of them gathered huge armfuls of brushwood, threw it into a pile, and set fire to it. Then all became quiet. The Sioux one and all rolled themselves in their blankets, and slept.

Leaving the parapet once more to the entire possession of the sentry, I descended into the fort. I knew that it was high time that I slept. My blanket was in one of the wagons outside the stockade. A few moments sufficed to obtain this: then I rolled myself in it, lay down in one of the rooms allotted to the male portion of our own party, and was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRETENDED TREATY.

WHEN I awoke it was nearly noon.

I looked around. The room was empty, the rest of my companions having risen hours ago. I was not long in reaching the outside of the fort.

The Indians had pitched their wigwams, and the scene was one of extreme idleness. Some of the warriors were sitting in

knots of threes and fours, smoking their long pipes and conversing with each other, while others lay in front of their wigwams at full length on the ground. As for their squaws, they were busily engaged over a score of fires that were burning in various parts of the clearing, preparing, doubtless, the *persippo*, a mixture of maize, wild rice, and finely-chopped venison.

The treaty I conjectured, would not commence until the afternoon. Along the river's bank, and near the edge of the clearing, pposite to that occupied by the Sioux, were groups of trappers, hunters, traders and villagers. A few of the traders keeping guard over the wagons.

I had not been watching the scene long before I noticed some half dozen of the Indians rise from their seats on the ground and approach one of the wagons. They walked boldly up to it, and were beginning to raise the oilcloth which had been fastened over the top—doubtless with the intention of seeing what lay beneath it—when one of the men who was keeping guard over it repulsed them in no very gentle manner with the butt end of his rifle. I saw the scowl that gathered quickly on the savage's face, and knew that, unless some one else interfered, there would be trouble. I did not fear for the safety of the guard, for I knew that if the savage went too far he would be shot dead on the spot. Wishing to prevent, if possible, any shedding of blood, I approached one of the wagons, my own property, and with the blade of my hatchet, tore up the covering. I knew that among the goods were several boxes of beads—always an acceptable article among Indians. After some searching, these were found. I drew one of the boxes forth, and attracted the attention of the angry savages toward it. I was surrounded in a twinkling. I handed each one a string, which they received with grunts of satisfaction. Then, after putting them round their necks, they stalked proudly away. Thus was the threatened quarrel averted.

This little transaction had not been without its witnesses—the Indian squaws. Before I had time to replace the box, I was the center of at least fifty of them, they intimating that they wished to come in for a share of the trinkets. Now I knew that I was in possession of enough beads to supply every Indian in the village, but that didn't warrant my distributing

them gratuitously. As I have said before, I had purchased them with the intention of trading them for furs. Insignificant as their cost had been, I should lose scores of dollars by the operation ; and as I had invested nearly the whole of my capital in my scheme, the idea of parting with the trinkets on those cheap terms was not to be entertained. Besides, I saw that most of the squaws already possessed a string—some of them two or three. But avarice was one of the strongest traits of the Sioux character, and they wished for more.

However, I distributed what that box contained, by throwing them among them. Such a scene of scrambling and quarrelling followed that my pen lacks the power to describe it. The squaws, one and all, ran to secure a portion of the trinkets each. They rolled over and over each other, all the while keeping up a shrill scream, while the warriors sat quietly looking on. A few managed to obtain possession of whole strings, but they were very few. The rest were only fortunate enough to receive a few odd ones, which would, doubtless, be used to ornament some forest belle's fawnskin moccasin.

It was afternoon. Soon it would be time for the council to begin. Already the warriors were making their preparations for it. So were we, on our side. The ground we were to occupy was just without the stockade of the fort, and the warriors were beginning to take their positions upon it.

As they took their seats, we were struck with the peculiar manner which they all seemed to have about them. They appeared to act like one who has set his mind upon having something or other, and momentarily expects to hear it refused him. I noticed one of the warriors in particular, a middle aged man, whose dress showed him to be of some consequence among his tribe. St. Pierre was sitting next to me, and I asked him if he knew the Indian's name. He told me that it was Nashota, the second chief of the Sioux nation. Bloody Arm, their head chief, was absent, but we knew—what the savages little suspected—that he would appear on the morrow.

The Sioux had formed the arc of a circle, concave to that of ours. The fire was kindled, the calumet filled with "kinkinik"—the inner bark of the red willow—and the "smoke"

that invariably precedes an Indian council commenced. A few whiffs were first taken by the chief, who then passed it to the next warrior at his right. He in turn passed it as soon as he had taken a few whiffs to the next; and so on until it came to us. Like the savages, we each took a whiff or two, and passed it quickly from mouth to mouth.

During the time occupied by this, I had taken a careful survey of our own party. We outnumbered the savages by nearly twenty. I noticed among the number the major, Lorraine and Bill Buck. I looked to see if the Londoner was there. No, he was not. On making this discovery, I felt a choking sensation stealing over me. Where was he? Within the fort, doubtless, in the company of *her*—of Minnie. The thought tortured me.

But the smoke was ended, at length, and the council began. The first speaker was the chief, Nashota.

"Pale-faces! it is now many moons since the warriors of the Sioux nation have come from a long distance to hold a few words, and smoke the pipe of peace with their white brethren. Since last we were here, more than one change has taken place. The forest is now no longer the home of the Sioux—it has been shared with the pale-face.

"His children are thick as the leaves of the trees, and they trample already upon the graves of our forefathers without a thought of whose ashes are beneath their feet. But do we grumble at this? Do we wish to again claim the land? No; we have no right to it. I have spoken."

The old hypocrite sat down. Fair as the words seemed, there was more than one of us that saw the motive that lay beneath them. Yes, subtle as were the savages, there were many on our side that were their equals in cunning. The next speaker was Lorraine. His speech was short, and to the point.

"Sioux! your chief says that you have come hither for the purpose of strengthening still more the bond of peace that has now existed for many moons between the red-men and the white. We would gladly believe you, but it is impossible."

"Impossible!" exclaimed several of our enemies, who well understood the meaning of the word.

"Ye:", repeated Lorraine, "impossible."

"Do the pale-faces, then, believe the words of our chief to be like the tongue of the serpent, crooked?" asked one of the savages, an orator among his tribe. "If so, let him speak. We are ready to listen."

"We have received information," continued Lorraine, without seeming to heed the question, "that the Sioux have again decided to dig up the hatchet; and we feel that such is the truth."

The words produced an effect upon the savages difficult to describe. There were fierce looks of guilt, hatred and vengeance passed between them. They saw that they would not be able to accomplish what they had plainly intended to; that is, lull the suspicion of the whites, and therefore secure an easier and more successful "coup." Instead of the air of meekness and submission which they had endeavored to assume before, their looks and actions now became, to a certain degree, bold and defiant. Had they been in the majority, they would not have hesitated a single moment to try the fortune of a battle. But they were not; and they all knew that they must make the best of the situation, and patiently await the arrival of their head chief, Bloody Arm, and his band.

There was only one among them that did not seem to lose his ground. That was the chief, Nas'ota.

"How did the pale-faces' informer receive his information?" he asked, rising to his feet.

"By one who was a spy in their camp. The red-men knows him well."

"His name," demanded several.

"I will tell you," said Lorraine. "It is *Scarlet Moccasin*."

At the mention of that terrible name, it produced another effect upon the Sioux, but this time different from the last. Now their looks became fearful, and not a few were seen to involuntarily shudder. Anxious glances were cast around, as if to discover whether the dreaded bearer of the name was upon the ground.

This ended the council. The savages knew they could accomplish nothing then, and that further parley was useless. After a few more uninteresting sentences, they rose from their

seats, and returned crestfallen to their wigwams on the opposite side of the clearing.

"Waugh!" exclaimed one of the trappers, as soon as they had passed beyond hearing. "I've see'd a heap o' Injin in my time, an' a wickedder lot I never sot eyes on afore."

"I hope," said Major Maurice, "that the troops from Fort Snelling will arrive here before Bloody Arm. I am afraid we shall have a hard time of it if they do not."

CHAPTER IX.

A DISCOVERY.

AGAIN it was sunset.

I had wandered down to the river's bank, seated myself beneath a willow that was growing a few feet from the water's edge, and was engaged in the contemplation of the scene before me, when something startled me. It was the sound of voices. I looked in the direction from whence they came.

Standing at a distance of several rods from me were two persons—the Londoner and Minnie. I watched them eagerly. They could not see me, for I was perfectly concealed by the willow. She held in her hand a paddle. It was evident from their actions that they had not left the fort together, but that one—he—had *followed* the other. Her look was any thing but an agreeable one.

"Ha! ma deaw Minnie," said Tompkins, "shawly yaw are not going to cwoss this rivaw alone?"

"And why not?" asked the young girl. "I have often done so before."

"Aw! weally! If yaw've no objections to my compary, aw should like to go acwoss with yaw."

"None," was the low response.

I saw by the manner in which it was said, that it was said unwillingly. I felt my heart leap with delight.

He stood upon the bank, while she approached a clump of reeds, and drew forth a light birchen canoe. She motioned

the Londoner to get in. I watched his motions with eager interest. Well I knew that to get seated in one of those frail vessels requires no small amount of skill. The Englishman seemed to be unaware of the fact, for he approached the canoe with the same boldness that he would have done had it been a ship's boat in which he was about to embark. I saw at once what the sequel would be. He had scarcely stepped inside, when the light craft tipped sideways, and he was precipitated into the water. The water was two feet deep, and the consequence was, he became wet from head to foot. His fine suit of broadcloth became instantly saturated, of course. To pity him was impossible. I felt that he was justly punished for intruding his company where it was not wanted. After some floundering about, he managed to regain his feet, and then the bank. His appearance was indeed ludicrous and crestfallen. He managed to stammer out an apology, then commenced making tracks for the fort, there to exchange his costume for a more comfortable one.

I looked at the young girl's face. I thought I could detect a smile upon it.

The canoe had shipped a small quantity of water by the accident, but she drew the vessel upon the bank, and emptied it with the ease and dexterity of a practiced hand. Pushing it back into the water, she entered it, paddle in hand, and took a seat in the stern. With a few strokes of her paddle, she was out in the stream and heading for the opposite shore.

What could be her object? I could not guess, unless she was intending to meet some one. Again bitter feelings began to creep into my heart as I entertained the thought.

But she had not left the bank long, before I saw another canoe leave the shore, but at a greater distance down the stream. It was getting dark, but I knew the occupant of that canoe at a glance. It was St. Pierre!

On making this discovery, impulse brought me to my feet. No, it was not—it could not be that. I had also a rival in St. Pierre. It was during our stay in New Orleans that he had told me of the misfortune that had attended his first affection, and that he had sworn never to place them on another woman as long as he lived! I remembered this; and then my feelings toward him became less bitter. That day

I had imparted to him, as a friend, the love I felt for Minnie Lorraine, and he had not given me the slightest cause to suspect that he, too, loved her.

I watched them both with feelings too intense to describe. They had now neared each other. He was paddling with an energy that sent the canoe over the water like an arrow; she only dipped her paddle occasionally. In a few seconds they would be alongside each other.

All at once, a wild impulse seized me. Why could I, too, not cross the river, and thus learn the object of the meeting between the two? I knew that there were plenty of canoes in the village, and as it was getting rapidly dark, I could cross over at some distance up the stream without danger of being perceived by either of the parties in question. I resolved to do so, and without further delay.

I knew where were kept a quantity of paddles; and before long I was in possession of one. A few rods from the edge of the opening, on the left side as you approached the river, was a small creek, in which were some half-dozen canoes. I selected one of the lightest, embarked, and after a few strokes, had debouched from the mouth of the creek, and was crossing the river with all possible speed. I knew that, unless my paddle should snap, I would not be many moments behind those who had preceded me. They had not yet landed. St. Pierre had caught up with, and was only letting his canoe glide forward with the same speed as hers. I marked well the point for which they were heading, and directed my own canoe so as to touch the bank at some distance above.

The river, at this point, was some two miles wide, and by the time I reached the opposite shore, it was quite dark. As yet, the moon had not risen. When under what would have been the shadow of the bank, had it been day time, I turned the bow of the canoe half-round, and headed down-stream. I shot over the water like an arrow, and as noiselessly as a fish. After continuing on in this manner for some distance, I knew that I must be approaching the spot where St. Pierre and Minnie had landed. Accordingly, I slackened my speed. A moment later I sighted, though very indistinctly, the two canoes, and what was more, their occupants. The latter, then, had not yet landed; but they were making preparations to do so.

St. Pierre's was the first canoe that touched the bank, but he was followed quickly by the young girl. Both sprung on shore, drew their canoes half upon the shore, and together ascended the bank.

I was not long in following their example.

Once on shore, I knew that I could get quite close to the parties without danger of being discovered. I crept forward on my hands and knees, through the thick brushwood that covered the ground, until I could distinguish through the thick gloom the outlines of my friend and his lovely companion. I was now close enough to hear all that might be said; therefore I did not trouble myself about creeping any closer.

When my eye first fell upon them, they were standing up, but a moment later both seated themselves on what appeared to me like the trunk of a fallen tree.

"Well, Minnie," I heard the cheery voice of St. Pierre say, "so you wished to speak to me, did you? What can it be about, my dear girl?"

That, at any rate, was not the voice of a *lover*, I knew.

"Yes, M. St. Pierre," said she; "I wished to speak to you upon something of, to me, the deepest importance."

"Ha! Well, my little Silver Leaf—your Indian name, you know—I'm ready to listen. But I think I can guess what it is."

"What is it, then, M. St. Pierre?"

"Why, this. You wish me to find you a husband."

He accompanied these words with a peal of laughter that echoed again and again through the woods. I listened anxiously for the reply.

"No," said she, "I wish to speak of my *brother*."

The solemn tone in which these few words were uttered caused the mirth of my friend to come to a sudden stop.

"Your brother, Minnie?" he said, in a low, serious tone. "Pardon my jesting. But tell me, since it is of your brother that you wish to speak, have you seen him?"

"No, monsieur; I have not seen him for ten long, long years, though he has often been near the village. Even to-day I learned that only last night he was seen by Bill Price and Mr.—*your friend*."

"Oh! you mean Harry? Yes, Minnie, he mentioned the

fact to me to-day, though he knows not, of course, that Scarlet Moccasin is your brother."

Ha! Scarlet Moccasin and Minnie Lorraine were, then, brother and sister! Now I remembered why I had been so struck with the features of the man the night before, though I was not able to tell exactly why. Yes, his nose, the curve of the eyebrow, the expression of the eye—although the color was different—were hers. But the conversation has begun again.

"And you wish to see him?" asked St. Pierre.

"I do. Oh! monsieur, if you knew how lonely I am! If my brother would only give up the life he now leads, and come and live with us, I should feel so happy! My father seldom takes any notice of me, for he is always yearning for my brother's return. He was his favorite."

"And what would you have me do, Minnie?"

"I would have you try all in your power to see my brother—for I know he will stay near the village, now there is danger of another outbreak—and ask him, implore him to either return home, or to let me see him once again, even if it be but a single moment. He was but a young man when I saw him last, and oh! monsieur, how he must have changed!"

"I will, Minnie," said St. Pierre, touched by the appeal. "I will; though I am afraid it will be useless. You know the fierce oath he took—never should his father, mother or sister look upon his face again, until he had been most terribly revenged!"

"I know it, M. St. Pierre, but oh, God! he must have kept his vow long ago!"

"Perhaps so. Let us hope for the best."

"Yes, for I feel certain you will succeed. But, M. St. Pierre, this friend of yours, Mr. Montgomery, is he married?"

"Married! Silver Leaf, no. But why do you ask?"

"Only out of curiosity. But I fear he is displeased with me."

"Why?"

"Last night we were introduced. He danced only once during the whole evening—that was with me—then he left the room. Curious, M. St. Pierre; was it not?"

"Ha! Silver Leaf, my friend is curious about some

things. However, I know the reason why he left the room. He felt jealous of your companion, the Londoner."

"Jealous! M. St. Pierre," exclaimed she.

"Yes. Minnie, he loves you."

"You jest, monsieur."

"No, Minnie, I am in earnest. He told me so—or, at least, hinted as much."

"I believe you. Well then, monsieur, if to think constantly of one, to wish him to be always near you, and to have his image on your mind as well as if you had known him for years is to love, *then I love him*. But, M. St. Pierre, I have told you this as a friend. Breathe not a single word of what I have said to Mr. Montgomery."

"Oh!" said my friend, with a light laugh, "if he is sharp, he will find it out himself."

It is impossible to depict the wild transports of bliss that filled my soul on learning that my affection was returned. I would gladly have jumped up, and made the forest ring with shouts of joy!

I now felt heartily ashamed at having played the eaves-dropper, but as it was now late to retreat, I was forced to maintain the position I sustained.

But it was growing late, and the two at last arose to take their departure. I could now see their movements plainly, for the moon was just clearing the edge of the horizon. I watched them until they had embarked, and were far out in the stream, before I thought of returning myself.

CHAPTER X.

A TALE OF WRONG.

I was about to rise from my position, and return to the canoe I had taken care to conceal, when my eyes happened to wander toward the spot occupied by St. Pierre and Minnie, a few moments before. To my surprise, I beheld the figure of a man, standing motionless as a statue. The dress,

the face, the every thing about him were not to be mistaken. *It was Scarlet Moccasin!*

So unexpected was his appearance, that my heart seemed to leap almost into my mouth. He maintained the motionless posture in which I had discovered him for a few moments longer; then he took a few steps forward. His gaze became fixed on the retreating canoe, now far out in the stream.

"Yes, sweet sister," he said, loud enough for me to hear him, "I have often been near you, when you little suspected it. So you long for my return? Well, your longing shall soon cease. Soon, I shall have completed my revenge, and then we will depart far from these wild scenes! Sweet sister, wait!"

At this juncture, I happened to place my hand on a dry stick, which snapped under the pressure. It was enough for the sharp ears of the hunter; and I saw him start, and look quickly in the direction of the bush which concealed me. Fearing that he would raise his rifle and fire, I cried out:

"Hold! It's I, Scarlet Moccasin!"

At the same instant I rose, and stepped toward him.

"Ha! Mr. Montgomery, it is you? It is perhaps fortunate that you spoke, as I was about to risk a chance shot toward you."

He grasped my hand, giving it a gentle squeeze—the never-failing sign of a true, generous and passionate heart! I already looked upon him as a friend. No wonder; he was one of that happy class of individuals with whom a friendship is soon formed, or else never.

"Well, monsieur," he said, with a smile, and releasing my hand, "it seems that you, as well as I, have been playing the eavesdropper?"

"Yes," said I, "but you were acting in the capacity of a brother, and had a right to. As for me—"

"You were in the capacity of a lover. I see well, monsieur, how the case stands. Believe me, I am not offended. I heard my sister's declaration.

"But," he continued—and his brow became clouded—"would you not like to learn something more of me—her brother? Doubtless you have heard something of me before?"

"I have," I answered, "but never really knew whether or not to place any reliance on it. But why do you ask the question?"

"Because it is but fair that you should know something definite about the only brother of her whom you profess to love. Some have given me hard names."

"That makes no difference to me," I replied. "You might be a fiend incarnate—she the personification of every thing that is noble and good!"

"True! Listen, then, to a short history of my life."

We each took a seat on the trunk of the fallen tree, and my newly-made friend commenced:

"You have ever heard me called, I suppose, Scarlet Moccasin? My real name is Robert Lorraine. All my life has not, as many who know me suppose, been passed in the forest. My father was formerly a merchant in one of the leading Eastern cities, but when I was in my twenty-first year, he became a bankrupt. He determined to come out West, and for a time, we lived in St. Paul. I and Minnie, of course, came with him. But there was another who accompanied us—a fair being whom I loved better than any one else on earth. I had known her for a long time, and when it became known that I was to come West, I can not tell you how she wept, and implored me not to go without her. Oh! monsieur, I did not show it, perhaps, but my heart suffered as intensely with the thought of parting from her, perhaps forever, as did hers. No, I would rather have died than have left her.

"I was not much past twenty, and she was not quite eighteen, but we were accordingly married. Mother she had none, and her father, feeling outraged by her conduct, refused to own her. But, knowing my love for her, she cared little, and a week after our marriage we started for St. Paul.

"A year of happiness soon passed. My own sweet, darling wife was now dearer to me than ever. But, fortune willed it that I should leave St. Paul, and come to New Salem. Heavens! monsieur, that move was the cause of my life's being blasted! It was against my father's wishes that I left St. Paul, who wished me to still continue with him. But I heeded not his advice."

Here, for a few moments, the speaker remained silent. His

emotions were too intense to permit him to proceed. But at last, with a mighty effort, he recovered himself.

"At that period," he continued, "New Salem consisted of but two or three families, and a few soldiers who garrisoned the fort. They were in constant dread of the Sioux, and, poor creatures, God knows they had cause! One morning, late in the fall of the year, I started for a day's visit to St. Paul. I hated, for some unaccountable reason, to leave my darling behind, but necessity compelled me. I kissed her, bade her be of good cheer until my return, mounted my horse, and rode off. Once, before I had passed from her sight, I turned round and looked back. She was gazing after me with tearful and sorrowful eyes. The sight caused me to bring my horse to a sudden stand-still. Then I wheeled him round, and galloped back to the cabin. She looked surprised, but did not speak until I had dismounted, and clasped her to my breast.

"'Oh! Robert,' she said, 'for some unaccountable reason, I feel very, *very* unhappy.'

"Alas, so did I, but I did not utter my feelings, knowing that it would only increase her unhappiness. Again I tore myself away from her, mounted my horse once more, and rode away at a gallop. That time I dared not look back.

"I reached St. Paul, transacted my business as soon as possible, and started for home. I lingered not a moment. But did I feel happy? No! I was tortured constantly with dreadful forebodings. Well, monsieur, when I reached what should have been my home, I saw in its stead a heap of yet smoking ashes. The rest of the cabins, and the fort, were still there. My home, only, had suffered. Why, I never learned. I comprehended the scene at a single glance. The deadly Sioux it was who had been there, with his firebrand, bow and tomahawk.

"Then I made a vow, which I solemnly swore to keep—I swore that I would seek the fiends that had ruined me, and that one and all should suffer a miserable death. Subsequently I learned the full particulars, from a friendly Indian, of my poor Rose's death. I learned that the very night following the morning of my departure, five of the fiends went to my home, dragged my wife from her bed, and set fire to the cabin, and

then rapidly disappeared before the garrison had time to interfere. They compelled their poor captive to follow them on foot. She kept up with them for three days. Then declared her inability to go any further. One of the wretches—I consider him, monsieur, the most humane of the lot—toma-hawked her on the spot.

“This was told me three days after her death. I found her body. It lay there just as it had fallen; and I dug a shallow grave with my hatchet, and buried her in it. Then I exchanged my dress of cloth for one of buckskin, and took to the woods. I swore that I would never again enter the habitation of a man until I had been most terribly revenged. In order to gain a name by which the wily savage would know and fear me, I dyed one of my moccasins—the left one—a deep scarlet. Hence my name!”

As he spoke he held up his left foot. The clear light of the moon enabled me to see it distinctly. It was, as I had often heard, *scarlet*.

“And your enemies,” said I, eager to hear the rest, “are they all dead?”

“All but one, and he, too, shall soon be no more. It is their chief, Bloody Arm. At the time of the occurrence I have just related, he was but a young warrior. I could have shot him over and over again, but that death would have been too easy for him. *I wish to take him alive*. As for the other four, one I hung by the neck, two I hung by the thumbs until exhaustion and hunger killed them, and the fourth I fastened to the trunk of a tree, and let him starve to death.

“Nor is this all. How many savages I have shot, I know not. I have pierced them by their camp-fires, and on several occasions have appeared suddenly in the midst of many a village in the middle of the day. Wily as they are, I have ever managed to elude them. But, monsieur, I have finished when I say that I shall soon, God willing, quit these cruel scenes for those of a more civilized community. I have played the demon long enough!”

“Monsieur,” I said, as he concluded, “I do not now wonder at your conduct. Those who do, monsieur, know not your history. If they did, like me, they would blame you no longer.”

The words evidently pleased him, for he slightly smiled.

"And," I continued, "you say that your sister shall soon see you again? With your permission, monsieur, I will be the bearer of the news."

"Yes. But pardon me," said Scarlet Moccasin, rising from his seat, "I am keeping you. It must be quite late."

Accompanied by my newly-found friend, I once more approached the river, and drew forth my canoe from its concealment. I then again embarked. My friend refused to accompany me, and I left him on the bank—motionless as a statue of marble.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ENCOUNTER IN THE WATER.

ON the opposite shore could be plainly seen the camp-fires of the Sioux, which threw their lurid glares far out into the stream. It was for these that I headed.

I knew that it must be late, and I accordingly used the paddle with all my energy. When about in the center of the river, to my vexation, the paddle suddenly snapped. Before I had time to grasp the blade, the canoe shot by it, leaving nothing in my hands but the now worthless handle. Here was a dilemma. The stream was very rapid at that point, and was beginning to bear me rapidly down it. Suddenly, I remembered that not more than a mile below were the rapids, and this only increased the difficulty I was in.

What should I do? I scarcely knew. There appeared to me but one plan by which I could reach the shore, and that was by swimming. Either shore was not less than a mile distant, but I knew that I had often swam that distance before. Even before I had entered my 'teens I felt as much at home in the water as any duck.

As swimming was the only plan I could devise, I prepared to execute it. I carried nothing heavier than the weapons in my belt. My rifle had been left in the fort. I sprang into the water, and when I arose to the surface, struck

out for the shore. I did not head for that point exactly opposite me, but rather up the stream, as that would prevent my being carried too far down. I felt the heavy, dragging weight as the water saturated my clothes, but I soon became accustomed to it, and swam more easily.

I saw that I should land, as I neared the shore, either just above or a little below a clump of tall rushes. I had accomplished fully two-thirds of the distance I had to swim before I could touch *terra firma*, when, suddenly, from out the rushes, darted two dark-looking objects, and at the same instant I heard several shouts and exclamations proceed from the bank. I was near enough to perceive at a glance that these latter were caused by human beings—by *Indians*!

It needed not a second look to assure myself of this, and with a sudden impulse I was about to turn round, and head for the center of the stream, when accident caused my eye to again fall upon the two dark objects in the water. The sight of those on shore had caused me to forget for a moment those nearest me, and during that time they had approached quite close. They were both *bears*.

Both were angry. I could easily tell that by the fierce glitter of their eyes, their displayed teeth, and low, snappish growls. Perhaps they had been wounded, and by those on shore. The idea was not improbable, as Indians often do hunt the bear, on a moonlight night. Instinct told me that I was in danger, but how to escape I knew not. My wet clothes would hinder me from escaping by swimming, as the bear is a fast swimmer, and would, therefore, easily overtake me. I could not, of course, use my revolvers; so I whipped my hatchet from my belt, and anxiously awaited for the animals to approach. I had not long to do so before the foremost was within reach of my weapon. It descended like a flash, the deep blade splitting his skull almost asunder. I could not help giving utterance to an exclamation of joy, for one, at least, of my enemies was done for. But the other one; he yet remained.

On seeing the fate that had befallen his companion, he seemed to hesitate about approaching any nearer, and began swimming in a kind of half circle round me, in such a manner that he kept at a distance off, and at the same time

prevented my getting a foot nearer the shore. I dreaded no less to approach him than he did me, for I knew that this time I might be less fortunate.

This lasted for some time, and the position which I was forced to keep in—a perpendicular one—was becoming exceedingly difficult and tiresome. At last I could stand it no longer. If the bear would not attack me, I would him. Still holding in my hand my hatchet, I changed my position, and swam slowly toward him. He waited until I was within four feet of him, then suddenly dived out of sight. I knew his object. He meant to seize me while under the water. Fearing that he would grasp me before I would have time to get away, like him I disappeared beneath the water. It was as I expected; we met. Quick as thought, I grasped the animal by its rough and shaggy hide, and struck at it with my hatchet. To my horror, I missed my mark; and the hatchet flew from my hands. I was nearly suffocated, and releasing my hold of the bear, rose to the surface. An instant later, he followed me. I still possessed another weapon which I could use—my knife. Even during the interval that the hostilities ceased—in order to allow us both to regain our breath—I whipped it forth, ready for a fresh onset. Now, neither the bear nor myself had any thoughts of running away. He recovered his equilibrium sooner than I did mine, and then made a rush forward.

I was ready for him, and with a quick movement, planted the knife up to the hilt in his left shoulder. He was crippled, but not seriously. In spite of the stab he had received, he still pressed on—pressed on until he clutched me with his long claws. I tried with all my strength to evade them, but it was impossible. In vain did I bury the knife again and again in his body—he only seemed to hug me the closer. At that moment I thought I heard a voice, not far behind me, bid me not to despair. But held as tightly as I was, to look around was impossible—and oh! he was nearly crushing me!

My strength is fast going, while that of my antagonist seems to be increasing. At least, so thought I. Again and again did I plunge the red and reeking blade into him. The water was crimson around us! He was bleeding profusely.

"Oh, heavens! will he never die. He is strangling me! Help! help! I can not breathe! I—oh!—"

When I recovered my senses, I was lying upon the hard ground. I was not alone. As soon as I opened them, my eyes fell upon some one sitting by my side. I looked at him with interest. He was an Indian. He was not the only one there. At a few yards distance were several others, smoking their calumets round a huge fire.

The one near me was young, and very handsome. His dress was that of a chief. Long did I gaze at him before I attempted to move. He was not looking at me, but his gaze was directed toward the dark, gloomy depths of the forest, as if he were engaged in deep thought. I wondered what he could be thinking about. Perhaps he was, like me, in—

I hated to disturb him, but the position I occupied was becoming painful. With the aid of my elbow, I tried to rise to a sitting posture. Then I knew, for the first time, that I was severely wounded. To rise without assistance gave me too much pain. The young Indian by my side perceived the effort I was making, and, placing one of his hands under my shoulder, I was soon in an easier position.

"You are hurt rather severely," said he, in excellent English.

"My arm pains me somewhat," I replied.

"I believe you. The bear clawed you fearfully. But, sir, you fought admirably. My friends—" and he pointed toward the group round the fire—"can not but talk of your courage. One bear in the water is more than a fair match—but two! by the Great Manitou! you should be called 'The Slayer of Bears.'"

"But," said I "how is it that I am here?"

"Oh!" said the Indian, "I drew you ashore myself. You fainted a minute before the bear died. See, yonder they both are."

He pointed toward two dark-looking objects at a short distance from the fire. I had no difficulty in recognizing in them the dead bodies of my late antagonists. I involuntarily shuddered as I beheld them.

I learned from my companion that he had been one of the

party that I had seen upon the bank, and when he saw the bears attack me, ran to fetch a canoe which they had concealed a short distance up the stream. He had approached me just as I fainted, and after releasing me from my adversary's clutches, drew me into the canoe, and then took me ashore.

"You will have a lame arm for a few days," said he, in conclusion; "but you came off splendidly!"

Alas! The prospect of having a useless arm at that time, looked any thing but pleasing. I knew that, should we be attacked on the morrow—as many expected—I would only be a mere looker-on. To raise a pistol now was an impossibility; much more a rifle.

I conversed with the young Indian for upward of an hour, then sleep began to steal over me. I did not feel strong enough to return to the fort, and, at the invitation of the Indian—whose name, he told me, was Sycomus—passed the night in the forest. Sycomus and his party were not Sioux, but Chippewas; and this it was that made me comply with the invitation.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRAITORS.

ANOTHER day passed. Bloody Arm and his band had not yet appeared.

Long after sunset, I again wandered to the seat under the willow; the one I had occupied the evening before. The first faint beam of the rising moon was just appearing above the horizon. The light evening zephyr was sighing gently among the tree-tops, and as it crossed over the blue waters of the St. Peter's, raised it gently into wavelets. I carried my right arm in a sling. It felt hot and painful; but, in spite of that, I felt happy. Yes, happy; for that very afternoon I had seen her I loved, and conveyed to her her brother's message. We had lingered long together, and how much was said in that time is impossible to remember. At first she had been

somewhat reserved, but I knew for all that that she loved me. Had I not heard her confess it the night before? Ha! she knew not that I had been playing the eavesdropper. Perhaps it was better for me that she did not. I—

Again were my thoughts, as they had been on the previous night, interrupted. Through the foliage of the willow I saw some one approaching. It was St. Pierre. He walked straight to where I was seated without a moment's hesitation.

"Come, my friend," said he, "you have changed greatly, the last day or two. You used to be merry, fond of company, *et-cetera*, but now you prefer solitude. I know the reason, my boy. I was once in the same situation myself."

"You knew I was here, then?" I asked, smiling.

"Yes; I saw you come. I had been looking for you. I have something important to communicate."

Drawing near to me, and speaking in a low voice, St. Pierre said:

"Harry, you know, of course, that half-breed that you hired at St. Paul, after the row we had?"

"I never noticed him particularly. He seems to be a good hand at mule-driving."

"No doubt, Montgomery; but he is a miserable villain."

"You surprise me! What has he done?"

"Listen. This afternoon I accidentally overheard the outlines of a plot between this half-breed and the Sioux chief, Nashota. When Bloody Arm arrives the half-breed is to contrive to kill the sentries, and then open the gate of the stockade in the night. Thus, you see, we will be in the red devil's power. What think you now of your servant?"

A feeling of horror seized me.

"Have you informed the major?" I asked.

"No, not yet. I wished to learn all the details, first. They agreed to meet again to-night, under an oak that stands about a mile and a half from here. I informed old Bill Rice about it, and he is going with me. Won't you come along? There is no danger, for even should we be discovered, I and Bill will be more than a match for all that will be there."

I at once assented; and we forthwith prepared to start for the place of rendezvous. A peculiar whistle by St. Pierre

brought the trapper to our sides; and after a few words of caution from him, we entered the forest. The trapper preceded us a short distance, constantly on the lookout for any "sign."

By this time the moon was well up in the heavens, and the utmost caution was used to avoid being seen by any stragglers. We arrived in sight of the tree, however, without encountering either friend or foe. Here, secreting ourselves among the branches of the oak under which the plotters were to meet, we patiently awaited their coming.

An hour passed; still the plotters were absent. Another hour passed with a like result. Our situation was becoming tiresome.

"Ye are sure this hyar are the tree that war agreed on?" asked the trapper of St. Pierre.

"Yes, I am certain of it," was the reply.

No more was said, and again we listened eagerly. It was well that we did so, for, before ten minutes more had passed, we could distinctly hear the noise caused by approaching footsteps. A moment or two later, the noise ceased. The Indians, four in number, had halted beneath the oak, and seated themselves on the ground. Their ally had not yet arrived. We could see the savages fill their calumets, and commence to smoke. But they had scarcely done so, when the sound of footsteps again broke upon our ears. Looking in the direction from which they proceeded, we perceived two figures just emerging from the gloom of the road. One was Adam, the half-breed; the other a small statured, villainous-looking fellow who had joined us at St. Paul, like the half-breed, in the capacity of teamster. His name was John Memhard; by birth he was a Dutchman.

The two seated themselves on the ground, at a short distance from the group of savages.

"Well, Nashota," said Adam—for the chief was one of the party—"this is my friend that I spoke to you about."

"Ugh! It is well. Two is much better than one," said the chief.

"Yes. There are two sentries, and both must be attacked at the same moment, or else the alarm would be given," chimed in Memhard.

"Bloody Arm and his warriors come to-morrow night," said the Sioux chief. "Nashota was told so by Sach-e-grah, the Antelope, this afternoon."

After some debating on the matter, it was decided that on the following afternoon Nashota and his band were to break up their camp, and take their departure. They were to join Bloody Arm and his band at some distance up the river, acquaint them with the plot, and wait there until after sunset. Then the united forces were to march toward New Salem, and the arrival would be made known to the two traitors by their imitating the screech of an owl thrice in rapid succession. Adam and Memhard were then to simultaneously rush upon the sentries, tomahawk them, and then open the gate of the stockade. The rest would be left to the savages.

"Well, Nashota," said Adam, after all this was arranged, "how much are we to get for this? We must have a good share."

"Yes. The wagons of the pale-faces are many. The spoil will be large," said Nashota.

"True. But your braves may claim the largest share. That ought to be ours."

"Ugh!" grunted one of the savages; "the warriors care not for beads, but scalps."

"Well," said Memhard, "I guess we won't quarrel about that. For my part, I don't want any of the goods. There is something you can give me that I prize far more."

"What is it that our pale-face friend would have?" asked one of the savages.

"What is it? I will tell you," said the Dutchman. "Know, then, that several moons ago, I stayed a few days in one of the Sioux villages. There dwelled there a maiden called Wash-o-wish, the Humming Bird, and when my eyes saw her I loved the Sioux maiden. I would have her for a wife. This, warriors, is my wish. Give her to me, and I will dwell among you always. She shall be the light of my lodge."

"Perhaps one of your warriors has already breathed words of love into her ears. If so, let him desist. Among the pale-faces are many squaws as beautiful as the Humming Bird.

There is the lovely Silver Leaf and the fair English girl. Let the warrior who would have the Humming Bird fill his lodge, choose one of these. Warriors, I have spoken."

On hearing the wretch mention the name of Silver Leaf, my blood ran cold through my veins. Oh, God! what a proposition. Well did I know the meaning of his words. If the savages succeeded in taking the fort, we should be massacred to a man. But not so the women. Alas! theirs would be a fate far worse than death! I knew that one and all would be carried helpless into the vast wilderness, there to be made the squaws of its human, but brutal denizens!

For some moments the Indians did not reply to the traitor's proposition. Whether it took them by surprise or not, they showed not the least unusual emotion, but sat silently puffing away at their calumets.

At last, however, one of them—a young warrior—arose.

"The pale-face asks for what can not be given. The Sioux maiden of whom he speaks is to fill the lodge of Moose Head. I am he."

This declaration took the villain by surprise. Nevertheless, he said:

"Moose Head, why not take one of the pale-face maidens into your lodge. As I have said before, there is the lovely Silver Leaf, the most beautiful of all women! If you wish it, she can be yours. But give up the Humming Bird, and I will see that the pale-face maiden is yours to-morrow night. Without I have your promise to give up the Sioux maiden, I can not do my part of the work, for nothing else will tempt me."

"Yes, Moose Head," chimed in the half-breed, "give the maiden up. There will be enough for you among the white squaws."

For a short time the savages conversed together in low whispers; then the consultation ended, and Moose Head said:

"It is well. I will make the exchange. Silver Leaf shall be mine; Humming Bird yours. I swear it by the Great Manitou!"

The villain had gained his point. For the charms of a dusky belle, he swore to betray his comrades and friends.

I glanced at the faces of St. Pierre and the trapper. It

was rather dark, but what light there was, was enough to portray the awful expression of their face as they listened to the conversation. The neck of the trapper was stretched forward, his lips, pale and bloodless, were drawn tightly over his teeth. His eyes protruded forward, and the glances they shot forth were filled with hate and deadly vengeance! I felt afraid lest he should forget himself, and punish the villains on the spot. I was about to whisper something in his ear, when I observed the party below rise from their seats, and begin to depart. The conference was ended—the plot was fully laid.

We waited until they had been gone some time, ere we descended.

“Thank Heaven!” ejaculated St. Pierre, “their plot has been discovered in time!”

“Ef this child don’t fetch them ’ar two out o’ their boots to-morrow,” said the trapper, with a fearful oath.

“By Geehosephat! shootin’ ar’ too good fur ’em, says I. A piece o’ stout buckskin thong roun’ thar cussed necks ’u’d be better’n any thing else.”

“We had better capture them both this very night,” suggested St. Pierre.

“Waugh! no. The reds might get wind o’ it, somehow or other. Better wait till after they’ve mizzled; then grab ’em both; an’ when the reds kum to-morrer night, instead o’ taking us by surprise, we’ll take them, I reckon. Waugh! I hope them ’ar sodgers as the major sent fur ’ll arrive, then they’ll be enough to keep the fort ’ithout this hyar child’s help. He allers prefers to do fi’tin’ on his own hook, an’ in the woods, he diz.”

We arrived at the fort shortly after the two villains had done. The sentry at the stockade informed us that they had preceded us only a few minutes.

It had been agreed upon that we were to inform no one, save the major, about what we had heard, and that as soon as the savages left on the morrow, the two traitors were to be quietly secured by the four of us.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ATTACK.

THE following morning we observed an unusual commotion among the Indians. Before noon the wigwams had been pulled down, packed, and otherwise made ready for immediate removal. To most of the villagers, this was a welcome sight. As soon as the savages were gone, they thought they would be able to return to their forsaken cabins again.

Toward the middle of the afternoon, the Sioux began to file out of the clearing and into the forest. All of the trappers, teamsters, traders, and a few of the villagers, stood together in a group, watching their proceedings with the most intense interest. The savages departed without a single yell or whoop; and as we saw the last one disappear, our thoughts—I answer for the major, Bill Price, St. Pierre and myself—turned toward another direction. Almost simultaneously, we directed our eyes toward the two teamsters, Adam and Memhard.

Both were standing on the rampart of the fort, like us, eagerly watching the disappearance of the Sioux warriors.

"Come," said the major, in a low voice, "now is our time. But keep cool, or the rogues may suspect something."

We separated from the crowd, and approached the stairway which led to the ramparts.

The two villains did not fail to notice us, and as they looked down they caught the eyes of the trappers. They were full of hatred and triumph. I saw the two wretches suddenly start, and, quick as their suspicions, retreat backward from the edge of the parapet. Beyond a doubt, instinct had warned them of our intention.

We all felt that now there was no time to be lost. We sprang up the stairway with the greatest haste possible. St. Pierre was the first to reach the top, and I followed quickly in his rear.

On reaching the top I glanced around in search of the two would-be traitors. One of them only could be seen. This

was the half-breed. The other had disappeared! Adam was standing on the edge of the parapet, as if considering whether it was safest to try to escape by jumping. He had not much time to decide, for in less than half a dozen leaps I was near him; and grasping him by the collar, jerked him with all my strength into the middle of the platform. He was then seized and bound hand and foot in a twinkling.

But the other! Where was he? Perhaps he had been quicker and braver than his companion, and jumped from the roof. I rushed to the edge of the parapet, and looked over. I was quickly followed by the rest.

"Geehosephat!" exclaimed the trapper, whose anger at being thus baffled knew no bounds; "whar kin he 'a' mizzled to. He must be inside hyar, somewhar, though I'll be 'tarnally dog-goned ef I knows whar. Hullo, thar!" he continued, raising his voice, and directing it toward the sentry at the stockade gate. "Hes any one passed out o' thar within five minutes?"

The response was in the negative.

"I thort so. Besides, he wouldn't hed time to reach the kiver o' the woods afore we sighted him, ef he hed left the fort. P'raps he ar' inside!"

At that moment the eyes of the trapper happened to fall upon a pile of buffalo hides lying in one of the further corners of the platform. The expression of his face changed like a flash!

"Geehosephat!" he exclaimed; "why in h—I didn't I think o' thet afore?"

I saw him bring his heavy rifle to his shoulder with a quick jerk, point it toward the pile of buffalo hides, and the next instant his finger pressed the trigger. Almost simultaneously with the report, a number of the shaggy hides were flung upward, and from their midst bounded a human form! It was Memhard! He hurriedly glanced toward us, then sprung down the stairway.

"Missed him, by h—I!" ejaculated the trapper, laying down his rifle, drawing his knife, and preparing to follow. St. Pierre and I imitated his example. As for the major, he rushed to the opposite edge of the parapet, and hurriedly shouted to the sentinel:

"Waters! Take care! Don't let that fellow pass!"

The soldier saw whom he meant. When I reached the ground, the fugitive was not ten feet behind him. The soldier was armed with a musket—the Dutchman with a knife.

"Halt!" said the former, "or I will fire."

Without seeming to notice the command, Memhard rushed forward with still greater speed. He was close to the soldier's side before the latter had time to raise his weapon. The fiend buried his knife up to the hilt in his opponent's side, then sprung quickly through the gateway, and ran as fast as his legs would carry him toward the edge of the clearing.

By this time the whole fort was in the greatest state of excitement. The rifle-shot and our shouts had drawn those who had been in the fort outside. But of course, with only four exceptions, none knew the cause of the disturbance.

"Let him be taken," yelled the major, from the parapet, "dead or alive!"

The excitement now became still more intense. As one man, fifty rushed outside the stockade. Pistols and revolvers were drawn, and fired at the fugitive, who ran in a zigzag course in order to baffle his pursuers' aim. He did so; for not one of the bullets sent after him took effect.

"Waugh!" said one of the trappers, "we kin niver draw a steady bead on him, thet's cl'ar."

Oh, heavens! Was the murderer to escape? No, not until other means had been tried to capture him. By the dastardly murder he had just committed, he had forfeited his life. I could hear half-stifled curses and vows of vengeance proceed from the lips of many of those around me. He had now a good start, but perhaps he could be overtaken by some of us. I knew that I, myself, was a good runner, and felt certain that if I possessed greater bottom than the fugitive, would be able to overtake him. Before the thought had fairly shaped itself, I prepared to execute it. Replacing my empty revolver in my belt, I bounded after the fugitive with a speed that surprised even myself. Ha! I could run now; for I had an object in view. So had the pursued—he felt that he was running for his life. I had not started alone. A dozen others were at my side, but before a dozen rods had been cleared, I had forged

ahead of the rest; and I saw, to my gratification, that I was rapidly gaining upon the wretch still far ahead of me.

Of course, all this had taken but a few seconds of time, and the fugitive had not yet reached the woods. But he did so at last, however; but, before disappearing, he turned round, in order, no doubt, to see how far his pursuers were behind him.

He stood still a moment, then entered the wood. This had given me time to gain on him rapidly, and when I reached the edge of the clearing, he was not over half a dozen rods in front of me. I still felt quite fresh; and, nerving myself for an encounter, bade him stop. He still kept on; and drawing my revolver that I had not before used, aimed it at him, and fired. He fell to the ground, with a shattered thigh.

"For God's sake," he said, turning to me with an imploring look, "let me go."

"Let you go!" I exclaimed. "It is impossible. You are badly wounded, and see there!"

As I spoke, I pointed toward the crowd of pursuers coming on a full run toward us. The wretch groaned aloud; and then, after trying in vain to rise to his feet, commenced to crawl away from the spot as fast as he was able to. I did not try to restrain him; but, leaning against a tree, proceeded to load my empty weapons.

I had not been at this occupation long, when the rest of the pursuers came up with me.

"Whar is he?" demanded the foremost, who was none other than Bill Price. "Escaped, young feller?"

I made no answer.

The trapper was about to repeat the question, when an exclamation from one of the others interrupted him.

"Bu'st my b'iler! Lookee hyar! Blood!"

"Waugh!" exclaimed Price, pushing forward, "the young feller has winged him. See! Thar's whar he crawled away."

It was as I expected it would be; the trappers tracked the fugitive as easily as if he had been in sight. Soon an exultant yell, and a shriek for mercy, announced that the wretch was discovered. One of the trappers seized him by the collar of his coat, and jerked him with one hand from behind the

bush where he had been trying to conceal himself, into an open space of ground.

"Caged at last, eh?"

"He's a purty-looking feller, an' no mistake."

"Lam him, lam him; lam him wi' a bull-rope!" exclaimed Bill.

"Whar's yer rope, hoss?" asked another trapper.

"At the fort, I reckon. Hyar, two o' you fellers; go to the fort an' bring a couple o' long ropes, an' that 'ar cussed half-breed."

Two or three of the party started off to obey the trapper's order. I did not interfere. It would have been but useless, even if I had felt in the humor for it. I well knew the fate they were to undergo, and that both well merited it. Had they not been detected in the crime for which they—one, at least—were now to suffer, dozens of helpless men, women and children, would have been massacred, perhaps, in cold blood. To say, then, that I felt any sympathy for them, would be false; for I did not.

At length, those who had been dispatched to the fort returned, bringing with them two long ropes, and the half-breed.

In a twinkling a couple of slip-nooses were formed, adjusted round the unfortunate man's necks, and the other ends of the ropes thrown over the branch of an oak. In vain did the two wretches plead for mercy—for they were now in the hands of men among whom an offense is unpardonable. Bill had informed the rest of their treachery; and the two traitors, look in whatever direction they would, saw themselves confronted by faces stern and unrelenting.

"Well," said Bill, addressing Memhard, "ef you've any message fur thet ar' gurl thet yer bargained fur, this child 'll take it to her. Supposin' I take her a lock o' yer ha'r, eh?"

This jest—which time and circumstances made brutal—drew forth from the trappers a loud yell of laughter. The two wretches made no response, and ere the laughter had died away, they were suffering a horrible, horrible death!

Oh, God! The sight made me sick.

By the time that we arrived at the fort again, it was evening.

To our disappointment, the troops from Fort Snelling had not yet arrived. We felt certain that we were in for a fight; and as several hours were yet to elapse before the arrival of Bloody Arm and his warriors, our hopes lay in the idea that the detachment would arrive in time yet.

But, no. Hour after hour passed, but the reënforcements were still absent. We had prepared ourselves for an assault, and every man in the fort was anxiously on the lookout for the first sound of the foe. The women and children had been ordered inside, and the gateway of the stockade barricaded securely.

To our vexation, the night is as dark as pitch. The moon is obscured by heavy, black clouds, and it is only by the lightning's flash that any thing can be distinguished. The wind howls through the trees like some huge monster's wail, making our situation appear still more dismal.

Hark! Yonder is the screech of an owl. Perhaps it is the signal. We listen intently. Again is the sound repeated, and yet again. By heaven! it is the signal!

"Waugh! Lookee yonder!"

"Thar's the skunks, by Gechosephat!"

Away on the further edge of the clearing, the next flash of the lightning revealed to us the forms of hundreds of warriors. Again the lightning flashes, and then again and again. By this time they have discovered us.

Instead of only the two sentinels they expected to see, they saw the parapet of the fort crowded by men armed and ready. Then the Sioux war-cry, loud and defiant, rung out. The next flash that came revealed them scattered by dozens all over the clearing. At intervals, only, can we witness their movements, but even that is enough to acquaint us with their intentions.

In less than ten minutes, we see a red flash proceed from one of the cabins. The first one is soon followed by another and another, until twenty are ablaze. Now, we could perceive their motions distinctly, as they flitted quickly about under the lurid glare of the conflagration.

As soon as these were well ablaze, a crowd rushed toward the fort. Fifty rifles cracked, and nearly that many savages fell lifeless to the ground. The rest retreated slightly, but,

being joined by another crowd, again they rushed forward. Only about one half of our number had fired, the first time, so that we were again ready for them. I was among the last that fired, and the savage at whom I had aimed fell flat upon his face, his forehead pierced by my bullet. I laid my empty rifle aside, and drew forth one of my revolvers.

But there was no occasion for me to use it, just then, for the savages had commenced a hasty retreat, leaving at least seventy of their number either dead or wounded behind them.

We hastily reloaded our rifles, and awaited for the next onset.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MIDNIGHT TREATY.

PRESENTLY one of the warriors was seen advancing toward the fort holding in his hand an arrow, to which was attached a piece of white cloth. This was evidently intended for a flag of truce. When near enough to be heard, the warrior cried out:

"Pale-faces! Our chief, Bloody Arm, wishes to have a talk with his white brethren."

"Why don't he come forward, then?" demanded Major Maurice.

"Why?" said the subtle savage. "The weapons of our white brothers are too sure. Bloody Arm has many enemies."

"How, then, is it possible to hold the talk?"

"I will answer, white chief! Let twenty-five of your men, yourself among them, come forth, and we will let you hold as many of our warriors as hostages. Let both parties be unarmed."

The proposition surprised us. There was not one of us, I believe, but what had plainly seen its motive. The savages had doubtless hoped that if we would agree to the proposition, and thus open the gate of the stockade, it would be easy to rush inside, and, as they far outnumbered us even yet, soon

decide the contest at close quarters. But the savages had to deal with men as cunning as themselves.

"Waugh!" said one of the trappers, "wi' other condishuns, yer'd better take his offer. Ef it comes to fi'tin', this child kin fight better, by Geehosephat! out thar than hyar."

"I cottons to you, old hoss," said another.

"Waugh!" said a third, "once in the woods this child ain't afeerd o' either Injin or devil, he ain't."

"Well," said the major, turning to the first trapper who had spoken, "what other conditions can be made?"

"Why, order the reds to pick thar men, and then let the rest o' them get clur back to the other eend o' the clearing. 'Eee sees, we kin thus git them inside, an' the gate shut, afore the others hev time to come up."

As the major knew that time saved was an important object, he determined to accept the savages' proposition. He did so, and the bearer of the truce-flag hurried back to report it to his companions.

We could soon see them picking out their men, and we prepared to follow their example. St. Pierre, Bill Price and myself were among the number chosen. Of course, the major was also to be one of the party. The savages had said that we were to proceed forth unarmed, but as we knew that beneath their blankets, the Indians would have concealed their bows and tomahawks, we took good care to place our pistols and revolvers in our bosoms. Of course we would have to leave our rifles behind, for to hide them was impossible.

As several minutes would elapse before our party would be ready to sally forth, I descended from the parapet into the fort. I was desirous of seeing my beloved Minnie once more—perhaps for the last time. I knew that errand on which we were about to set forth was a dangerous one—perhaps a fatal one. I found her in a room with several others, and hastily drawing her aside, said:

"Minnie, I wish to speak to you."

I then related, in as few words as possible, what was about to transpire, and concluded by saying:

"If I do not return, you will sometimes think of me?"

"Oh, monsieur, you *must* return!"

"Why?" I asked.

There was no response, and taking one of her hands in mine, I continued:

"Minnie, sweet Minnie! Do you not know that I love you? I loved you the first minute I ever saw you. Tell me, loved one, is my love returned."

"It is," was the low and sweet response.

I drew her light form to me, and imprinted a kiss on her ruby lips. It was the first kiss of love that I had ever given. Already the men were beginning to unbarricade the gates. I kissed the beautiful girl once more, and after uttering a few more hasty words of hope, joined them.

As soon as the gate was open, the warriors, twenty-five in number, stalked boldly into the stockade. When the last one had entered, the twenty-five on our side passed out. The rest of the savages were on the opposite edge of the clearing, seated in a circle round a huge fire they had kindled. By this time the cabins had burned to the ground, a glowing heap of embers showing only where each had stood. A short time sufficed for us to approach the savages. We seated ourselves on the ground, our party forming the arc of a circle concave to theirs.

Without a word the calumet was lit and passed slowly from mouth to mouth. The scene was beyond description. The lightning still flashed as vividly as ever, followed by appalling peals of thunder. The wind, too, was as fierce as ever. As yet, no rain had fallen, but we knew that it soon would. The faces of our foes, fearful at all times, were now rendered doubly so by the lurid glare of the fire, as it danced upon them. They darted looks of hatred at us from out their oblique orbs; and as I glanced along our line, I saw that the feeling was not unreturned.

But if the Indians smoked long, we smoked longer. For our part, we cared not how long the conversation would last, as we were only gaining time by it.

But at length the pipe was laid aside, and the "talk" began. The first speaker was the major.

"Warriors!" he said, rising to his feet, "we are here because your chief wished to speak to us. We are ready to listen."

For several moments after the major took his seat again, our foes preserved a strict silence. We all saw from this

that the getting of us outside the fort had only been a *ruse*; and knew well how the affair would terminate.

At last, however, one of the savages, a tall, powerful-looking man, arose. This, I soon learned, was their chief, Bloody Arm.

"White chief!" he said, "you desire to know the wish of Bloody Arm. Listen, then. For many moons the red-man has seen the pale-face upturn their hunting-grounds without a murmur. The graves of our ancestors can be seen no longer, for the white robber has covered them over. Nor is this all. There is one of your number who dogs the steps of our warriors, not only by day, but in the dead of night also. Many a noble brave has fallen by his hand, and from the hunting-grounds to which they have gone their voices cry out for vengeance.

"And," continued the savage, his voice growing bolder, "for that reason have we dug up the hatchet. We have sworn not to bury it again until our fallen warriors are satisfied. I am their chief—I shall keep my oath."

"But," said the major, "because one white man is your enemy, why should you seek our lives? Why not avenge yourselves on him?"

"On him!" exclaimed the savage. "He is a devil! He can not be harmed!"

At that moment a peculiar sound—the cry of a night hawk—reached our ears. It seemed to make an impression upon our foes; and again Bloody Arm rose to his feet.

"It is time—"

He never finished the sentence; for at that instant a form leaped into the circle which made the savages recoil with terror. Indians knew him as well as trappers. *It was Scarlet Moccasin!*

His rifle was slung at his back, and in his hand he grasped a tomahawk. With eyes flashing with hatred, he walked toward the Sioux chief until not half a dozen feet lay between them; then he drew his form up to its full height, and said, in a voice of thunder:

"The Scarlet Moccasin is here! He will answer for himself! Bloody Arm! you and I have been enemies for a long

time, and you, as well as I, know for what reason. At last we have met. Prepare!"

"True, pale-face! we have met. Warriors! you hear him. Ho-yo-ho-che-e! Ho-yo-ho-che-e." The crisis had come. As one man rose trappers and warriors; and the next moment we closed and clutched our foes.

The yells of the opposing combatants—the reports of the pistols—the clashing of hatchets and tomahawks—and the loud percussions of the thunder over us were appalling! Foemen grappled each other, and if nearly equally matched, rolled over and over on the ground before one or both were powerless. Some fell into the huge fire; and even in the midst of the licking flames, fought still!

At the commencement of the struggle I drew forth my two revolvers, and fired them at random in the faces of our foes. When both were empty, I stuck them in my belt, and drew my hatchet. I was not long in finding an opponent. Having the advantage of him, I dealt him a heavy blow on the head, which stretched him at my feet. The next time I was not quite so fortunate. I felt myself seized by the throat; and, turning round, beheld a savage with an upraised knife. Tomahawk he had none; and I knew that he must have lost the weapon—for every Sioux carries one—in the struggle. I parried the blow he intended for me with my hatchet; he dropped his knife and tried to wrench it from me. He was my equal in size, but in strength my inferior. After a short struggle, I caused him to release his hold, and the next moment he lay at my feet, dead.

All this occupied but a very short time, and when I again looked around, my companions were making for the wood with all their speed. I prepared to follow them. I saw that to fight where we were would only be madness. Our foes outnumbered us, six to one. In the woods we would stand a better chance.

Shortly after entering the forest, we turned sharply to the left, and approached the river. Here we halted, each man stationing himself behind a tree. We knew that the whole of our enemies would not follow us, for, soon after the commencement of the fight, we observed a crowd of them rush toward the fort.

Those of our enemies that did follow us, did so with caution, for now it was impossible for either party to distinguish the other, the darkness was so dense.

By this time, the rain was falling in torrents, and we were wet to the skin. The wind had moderated somewhat, but still it was enough to hurl the rain into our faces with terrific violence. Our situation was to be any thing but envied.

• CHAPTER XV.

THE ISLAND.

FOR upward of an hour, we held our situations in silence.

We were not followed—or, if we were, our enemies had lost us in the darkness.

“Waugh!” said one of the trappers, “thar at the fort, I’ll be boun’. I hope them as we left thar ain’t carried out thar intenshun.”

“No,” said another; “it ain’t likely. We left nigh seventy thar as kin fight as good as us, I reckon.”

“Well,” said Major Maurice, “how many of us are there left? All that left the fort can not be here.”

It was shortly ascertained that there were seventeen of us.

“Waugh!” said a voice, which I recognized as that of Bill Price, “thar’s eight good fellers gone. But whar’s Scarlet Moccasin? Ain’t he hyar?”

“Yes,” said a voice that I instantly recognized. “What is it, Bill?”

“I see’d yer at clust quarters wi’ the Sioux chief. Did ’ee raise his ha’r?”

“No. I wounded him badly, though, and just at that moment two others joined in, and I had hard work of it in getting away. Whew! how the wind blows. I don’t think it’s of any use in remaining here any longer, for we can not do any thing more until morning.”

“Whar shall we go? We can’t get back to the fort.”

"No; certainly not. The ravine is only about half a mile down the stream. Why not go there. That will shelter us from the storm."

The proposition was received with exclamations of pleasure; and, Scarlet Moccasin leading the way—as he was best acquainted with the locality—we were soon *en route* for the ravine. The manner in which we proceeded was a singular one. As it was impossible to see a single pace ahead of us, each took hold of the fringe of the preceding one's buckskin shirt, and in that way we avoided running against trees, and other impediments.

Arrived at the ravine, we were beyond reach of either wind or rain. The ravine was deep, and under an overhanging rock we found dry sticks and chips in abundance, which were soon collected in a pile, and set fire to. Around this, we impatiently awaited for the morning to appear.

I felt extremely anxious for the safety of those at the fort. In vain did I try to hope for the best—for, try as I would, I felt ill at ease. A dark foreboding had come over me. As dawn approached, the rain passed away. Before the sun had risen above the horizon, we quitted the ravine, and cautiously approached the fort. There a sight greeted our eyes which caused more than one murmur of alarm to issue from our lips. Not a vestige of any human creature was to be seen about the fort. The gate was wide open—and many of the palisades torn from their places, and lying on the ground. Together, we rushed toward the building, and entered the now useless stockade. Heavens! what a sight greeted our eyes. Turn whichever way we would, we saw blood. Blood lying on the ground, and spattered over the posts and palisades. Upon the ground were the dead bodies of our foes—dozens of them. A few whites were there, too; but these were not many. Where, then, were the rest? Perhaps inside the fort. We were about to proceed thither, when a shout from the opposite side of the clearing drew our attention toward that.

Casting our eyes toward it, we beheld a number of our companions beckoning for us to approach them. Without loss of time, we did so. Hurried explanations followed. It seems that soon after we had departed from the fort the preceding night, the twenty-five savages who took our places

proceeded to show hostile intentions. Fearing that they might be outwitted, those who remained in the fort took immediate measures to prevent any such catastrophe. The savages were to be bound, but resisting, were killed on the spot. Soon after that, the fort was attacked by the main band. Aided by the darkness, the Sioux gained the inside of the stockade, and after a fierce encounter, were triumphant. About forty of our party escaped ; but the rest were either killed on the spot, or else preserved in order to suffer a more fearful death afterward. On learning these facts, the first question asked was, " Shall they be pursued ? " Of course the reply was in the affirmative.

" Waugh ! " said a hunter, " there can't be much more'n a hundred o' the varmints left, arter what we wiped out, an' what war wiped out at the fort. Thar's fifty-eight o' us, adzactly."

After a short consultation, the trail of the retreating Sioux was found, and without further ado, we were soon following it rapidly up. By perseverance, we could catch up with our foes that night.

Hour after hour passed, still we proceeded onward, never wearying for a single instant. As night approached, we became more and more cautious every mile. The trappers knew from the appearance of the trail that we must be quite near our enemies. Then we would come to a halt ; and one of the trappers would go forward for about a half a mile, to ascertain if the coast was clear, then signal for the main body to come forward.

This had been repeated some half a dozen times, and the trapper had gone forward to reconnoiter once more, when we missed the signal. He had gone for upwards of an hour, and we knew from that that there was something in the wind. I should have mentioned that, before leaving the fort, we had secured our rifles. We found them just where he had left them, in the major's room. In their hurry, the savages had overlooked them, no doubt.

At last, however, the trapper returned, but it was not until it had grown quite dark.

" By the livin' Geehosephat ! " he exclaimed, " they're in for it now. Arter I left yez, I hadn't gone more'n a mile,

before I see'd the hull crowd jist afore me. Most on 'em war on the bank o' the river, an' the rest a-crossin' in three or four canoes they've got, to a kind o' island that's out in the river; an' thar's whar they'll stop fur the night, by Geehosephat! Waugh!"

"'Ees," said another; "we kin surround the island, an' give 'em h—l thar!"

"But," interposed Scarlet Moccasin, "you forget the prisoners. By some means or other, they must be separated from the savages before we commence the attack."

The truthfulness of the speaker's words was apparent to all.

"There is only one way," continued he, thoughtfully, "as far as I can see, in which it can be done, and that is this. Let the party be divided, and while one party decoys the main crowd away from the prisoners, the rest can rush in, unbind the prisoners, and hurry them toward the river. I know the island well."

"That's cl'arly the best way. But how ar' we to cross over?"

"The Indians have canoes. We must obtain them. The night is as dark as Erebus, so we won't have much difficulty."

The plan—seeing no better one was offered—was universally agreed upon; and we at once proceeded toward the river.

About half a mile from the shore was a long strip of land, from which proceeded, on the west side, a brilliant stream of light. It was the camp-fire of the enemy. One of the hunters, stripping himself of the greater part of his clothes, entered the water, and swam toward it. His object was to obtain the necessary canoes, which, he doubted not, he would be able to find.

In a marvelously short space of time, he returned, bringing with him four good-sized canoes. As many of the party as were able to, at once embarked, and, using the utmost caution, crossed over to the island. It was pitch-dark, and, taking care to keep out of the glare of the fire, we landed undiscovered. One of the party took the canoes back to bring over the rest.

Our enemies occupied a spot of ground some fifty rods from the river. After landing, some fifteen of us proceeded forward and not two dozen yards lay between us and them. I was

one of the party, for I wished to be as near to my beloved one as possible.

We took our positions in silence, impatiently awaiting the signal.

The savages—about a hundred in number—were seated in a circle round the fire, smoking their calumets. The prisoners were lying at some distance from the fire, and among them I could recognize the face of her whom I loved. She appeared to be tied, as well as the rest; and as I noticed it, I involuntarily groaned. Her father, too—for he was near me—noticed his daughter, and the look he cast toward those round the fire was terrible. I felt sorry for him. That evening I had heard him speak to his son, who only answered him by a wave of his hand. Alas! I knew the reason. I well knew the oath Scarlet Moccasin had made, and he was not the man to break his word, much as it would pain him to keep it!

Among those round the fire I recognized the two chiefs—Bloody Arm and Nashota. There was another actor upon the stage who attracted my attention. This was the Londoner. Poor Briton! He had been stripped of most of his finery, and, as the savages no doubt considered him more in the light of a lamb than any thing else, he was allowed to wander about unrestrained. He still possessed his eye-glass, which he would now and then raise, and survey his captors with an expression of countenance impossible to depict. His sister, poor thing, was seated by the side of my darling, like her, pale and weary.

For half an hour or more was this scene continued, then it became changed. Suddenly, our ears were assailed by a loud whoop, and the next instant a figure sprung into the very center of the circle of warriors. Before they could recover from their surprise, and rise to their feet, the figure was gone. It was Scarlet Moccasin. He disappeared toward the east; and when they recovered themselves sufficiently, a crowd of savages started in pursuit, leaving only about a dozen to guard the prisoners. We waited until their yells told them to be some distance off, then came *our* time for action. Simultaneously, a dozen rifles cracked, and nine of the remaining Indians fell forward—dead. The remainder cast a terrified glance toward the spot where we had been concealed, then

turned and fled. In a moment I was by the side of her I loved better than all others, and my knife severing the thongs that so cruelly bound her limbs. Then, half carrying, half dragging, I hurried her toward the river.

At that moment, Scarlet Moccasin again appeared upon the scene. He had succeeded in deluding his pursuers, but who, by this time, must have learned the news, and be hurrying back to the camp.

"Quick!" shouted the young man. "They'll be upon us in a twinkling!"

It needed not this to hurry our movements; and in less time than it takes to relate it, the women and girls were embarked in the canoes. One of the men that we had just released went with each canoe, for the purpose of looking after the safety of the females. They were ordered, as well, to return with the crafts in the morning, for by that time we would be ready to leave the island.

"About a mile down the river, on the right bank," said Scarlet Moccasin, hurriedly, as they pushed off, "is a high cliff. Land there, for it will shelter you."

Rifles cocked and ready; we awaited the appearance of the foe. We had not long to do so. Ere the canoes were a dozen rods out in the stream, the foremost of the savages appeared in the opening. Of course, to see beyond the glare of the fire was impossible; and we therefore waited until more should appear before we fired. One after another cautiously stepped forward until a dozen appeared. We—that is to say, as many of us as there were savages to be seen—fired. No one missed their aim.

The enemy had now discovered our position, but at a fearful cost. A wild yell announced their anger, and dozens of arrows began hurtling above our heads. We were lying at full length behind a high embankment, and unless our enemies were far above us, it was impossible for them to harm us. A better position could not have been chosen.

"If a few of us could outflank them," said Scarlet Moccasin, "it would throw them into such confusion that we could obtain an easy victory over them. Why not try it? I think it can be done without much danger. How many are willing to accompany me?"

All of those that heard him testified their willingness ; and Scarlet Moccasin, picking out some fifteen—most of them hunters and trappers—bade them follow him. In less than ten minutes' time, the cracking of rifles and the yells of the Sioux informed us that the little band had succeeded in their object. As Scarlet Moccasin had foreseen, the Sioux were thrown into a state of confusion. One of them inadvertently stepped within the glare of the fire, and the next instant fell to the ground, pierced by a dozen bullets from our quarter.

For some time after, nothing more was seen of our foes. We had no fears about them leaving the island. We knew that they deemed themselves stronger than we, and as they imagined the prisoners we had released were yet on the island, they would not fail to make an attempt to retake them. Perhaps some of the warriors had decided to make the female portion of the captives their wives. If so, they were not likely to be got rid of without a struggle.

We were not disappointed in our expectations. The final struggle came sooner than what we expected. Loud and vengeful whoops rung over the island, and in a body the Sioux rushed toward us. This time they had lain their bows aside, and carried their towahawks instead. Simultaneously, fifty rifles cracked, and the havoc was fearful. Still, they did not halt. As many of our band as possessed them, drew their pistols and fired them in the very faces of our foes. Several of us carried that most dreadful of all weapons in a close combat—the Colt revolver.

With these weapons at our command, we soon proved victorious. A few of our number fell ; but the loss was nothing compared to theirs. At last, we thought, they had all fallen but one, their chief, and he, too, was struggling for his life. I turned and watched the struggle with the greatest attention. The combatants were Bloody Arm and Scarlet Moccasin.

Neither possessed a weapon, and the victor would be he who possessed the greater amount of strength and endurance. The chief was much larger than his antagonist, but the latter, we knew, was possessed of far more than the ordinary amount of strength. He was far the quickest of the two, and succeeded in delivering several well-aimed blows full in his opponent's face. This was entirely a new mode of warfare to the

savage, and he seemed at a loss what to make of it. But the struggle did not last long. The Sioux managed to seize his opponent by the throat. The latter, planting a fierce blow on the warrior's body, in the region of the stomach, caused him to fall heavily to the ground, gasping for breath. Before the savage had recovered himself, Scarlet Moccasin had bound him tightly with a piece of buckskin thong.

We now proposed to obtain some rest, for we had been a long time without it. More brushwood was collected and thrown upon the fire, watches were detailed, and we lay down to sleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANOTHER COUP.

To increase the misery of our situation, morning came accompanied by a cold, raw wind, and a drizzling rain. To find shelter there was entirely out of question, for the island contained not a single tree, even. We had not tasted a particle of food since the preceding day, and our appetites since were consequently rather keen. Our hopes lay in the supposition that the canoes would soon arrive and take us off. We employed our time in disposing of the dead bodies of our foes; but, as there were so many of us, this occupation did not last long.

"You see that high cliff?" asked Scarlet Moccasin, pointing down the river.

"Yes," exclaimed several voices.

"Well, that's where I ordered the women to be taken to. It is strange that we can see nothing of them. But there is a cave near there. Perhaps they are in there."

"Waugh!" said a trapper—Bill Price—"this coon knows that ar' cave well. He's been thar more'n onect. Onect in particular. Boyees, did 'ee ever see an Injun cotched in a trap?"

"In a trap, Bill? What kind o' a trap war it?"

"A b'ar trap."

"No, never," was the universal response.

"How was it, Bill? Let's hear the yarn."

"'Ees," said another. "Any thing to pass away time."

The trapper, in order to try and dispel the despondency that had come over most of us, and who had a passion for fabricating "yarns," said :

"'Ee knows that when a trap grabs a wolf by the leg, sooner'n be cotched, he'll gnaw it clur off. Wal, did yer ever see an Injun do thet?"

"Never!"

"Wal, this child did, he did. It war about six yeern ago, thet I war a-trappin' on the river, and used to hide the skins. I took in thet very cave we war just speakin' of. When I first kum thar, thar war a couple o' b'ars thet hed laid claim to it. It war not long afore I hed 'em both killed, an' thar hides raised.

"While I war gone lookin' arter my traps one morn'g, some durned skunks kum thar an' stole a grist o' skins. The way this child swore, war a caution to snakes. It war on-possible to tell who did it, fur the cave's kivered with nothin' but pebbles, an' ole Nick hisself couldn't see a trail. Howsomever, the next morn'g, I waited roun' in hopes that the varmint would kum ag'in. But he didn't. He must 'a' watched me. It war gettin' to be night, when I went onect more to look at my traps, an' when I got back, by the livin' catamount! the varmint hed been thar ag'in!

"Ef I hed cussed in the morn'g, it war nothin' to what I 'id then. I swore I w'u'd cotch the thief, or, by Geehose- that! bu'st a-tryin'. He! he! he! Just afore I hed left the settlement, a frien' o' mine hed made me a present o' one o' them ar' traps called 'b'ar traps.' It war a reg'lar sock-dolager; an' the fust one I hed ever seen, though I've seen a grist o' 'em since.

"Wal, it war with thet thet I decided to cotch the varmint. The next morn'g I sot it, afore it war daylight, jest outside o' the cave, and kiver'd it over nicely with a few leaves. When daylight kum, I went as usual to look arter my traps. I hadn't been gone more'n half an hour, when I heerd one o' the most on'arthly screams 'ee ever did hear. It warn't long afore I war a-makin' tracks fur the cave. Right over it, 'ee

sees, ar' the cliff; and when I got thar, I peeped over the edge. The varmint thet had made the noise war a red-skin. The trap had sprung an' grabbed him by the leg.

"I watched him clusly. Arter awhile, he stopped hollerin' an' tried to wrench his leg out o' the trap; but it war o' no use. The Injun didn't understand it, an' it heid him thar lighter'n. The varmint well know'd I'd soon be back, an' what he'd get when I did kum, an' the way in which he twisted an' squirmed war a caution. I watched him until I war tired, then went down to him. But I didn't draw a bead on him, just then. No sir-ee. I wanted to get back my skins, fust.

"Arter a leetle coaxin', the red-skin told me whar he had hid 'em; and it warn't long afore I had 'em all, onect again. By Geehosephat! I kept the varmint in the trap all day, and all night, too. In the morn'g I went out to look at him, an' he war gone!"

"Gone, Bill? How did he get away?"

"That's jest what I'm comin' at. As I said afore, the varmint hisself war gone, but not the hull o' him. In the trap war the half o' one o' his legs, *which he had gnawed off, an' got away without!*"

A wild yell of laughter followed this dreadful falsehood, and some one, in the hopes of catching the old sinner in his own trap, exclaimed:

"But the bone, Bill! You forgot that he could not gnaw through that."

"Waugh!" said the trapper, in a serious tone, "that ar' easily explained. When—"

Some of us, at least, never heard the explanation that was about to follow, for at that moment an exclamation from Scarlet Moccasin interrupted the trapper, and drove all thoughts of the story, for the time, from our heads.

"Indians!"

"Geehosephat! Whar?" exclaimed several, springing to their feet, and cocking their rifles.

"If I am not mistaken," said Scarlet Moccasin, "I saw a head disappear just behind that ridge of ground yonder. It may—"

He did not finish the sentence, but, bringing his rifle to his

shoulder with the rapidity of thought, fired. Several of us dashed toward the ridge, and looked over on the opposite side. A savage was lying on his face, and two others were just disappearing through the bushes.

"Waugh!" exclaimed a hunter, "them must be what's left from last night."

A dozen or more started in pursuit. I followed, not with the determination of assisting, but only wishing to witness the ending of the chase. After following them for about a quarter of a mile, one of the trappers succeeded in killing another of the Indians. The other had disappeared.

"Thar's another, somewhar roun'," said a voice.

"Sartin. I see'd two o' them a-mizzlin' through the bushes. Whar kin the other be? P'raps down to the river."

At that point the island was only a few rods wide, and a few of the hunters rushed down to the river on both sides. The savage still lay concealed. Finding that he had not taken to the water, the trappers commenced beating among the thick willows that lined the shore.

The scene was becoming quite animating. By this time the rest of the party—with the exception of one or two that stayed behind to guard the captive chief—had approached, and they joined in the search. The excitement was more intense than if they had been driving a bear from his den—more intense because the *game* was human.

Scarlet Moccasin had been among the first that had arrived on the spot, but he did not join those who were looking among the willows. He stood near me, his quick eye glancing in every direction.

"Singular!" he remarked, to me. "I thought we finished them all last night."

Suddenly, I saw him start; and the next instant he raised his rifle. Hurriedly glancing along the barrel, I saw at what he was about to fire. It was the missing savage. He was lying at full length upon the ground not fifteen paces from where we stood, his body almost concealed by the leaves and stems of some species of creeping vine.

As I have said before, Scarlet Moccasin raised his weapon, but before he could touch the trigger, the savage sprung up,

and made a break for the river. The next instant came the report of the rifle.

"Missed him!" exclaimed Scarlet Moccasin.

The savage dashed over the ground with the speed of an arrow. Several of the trappers endeavored to intercept him; but the Indian, being young and agile, bounded over their heads, and dived into the water. When he arose to the surface again, he was far out in the stream. He only remained long enough to take breath, then disappeared again.

The looks of the trappers plainly showed the chagrin they felt at being thus outwitted. During all this, the rain had been falling in huge drops, and we were wet to the skin. In vain did we cast our eyes down the river, in hopes of seeing the canoes approaching; they came not. The trappers were beginning to get desperate. Hunger was beginning to torture them; and several came to the conclusion that they could stand it no longer.

"Waugh!" exclaimed one, "this hyar child ain't a-goin' to stick hyar any longer. Thar's game a-plenty in the woods yonder."

"Very true, old hoss. But how ar' ye a-goin' to get it? It 'u'd spoil yer shootin', to swim over."

"I can not imagine," interposed Scarlet Moccasin, "why they do not bring the canoes. I hope they are safe."

"Why not," said one of the hunters, "let a few o' us swim over to the other side, an' streak it through the woods fur the cave? It ain't more'n a mile off, jest roun' the p'int. Then we kud see what's a-keepin' 'em."

Without further ado, the hunter's suggestion was adopted.

The reconnoitering party was to consist of about half a dozen, of which I, at my own request, was one. I hardly need say that I felt anxious about my beloved one—anxious in the extreme. I would have risked any thing to have learned if she was safe, or not. Suspense is far more dreadful than the reality itself.

I was engaged in making the necessary preparations for the undertaking, when I was accosted by the Londoner.

"Ha! ma deaw fellow, I pweceive that yaw're to be one of the squawmishaws."

I replied in the affirmative.

"Ha! Well, if yaw should see ma sistaw, paw cweetaw, tell haw not to cwy. And ma paw Minnaw, too; tell haw I'm pawfectly safe, will yaw? By Jove! this wain will lay me up with that dweadful ague!"

I promised, and then he left me.

CHAPTER XVII.

"ROSE, THOU ART AVENGED!"

OUR preparations were soon completed. The only weapons we were to carry with us consisted of a hatchet and a knife. Of course, our rifles and pistols would only be an incumbrance, and we left them in charge of those who were to remain behind.

We plunged into the water, and swam in a direct line for the opposite shore. This reached, we climbed up the bank, and moved directly into the forest.

Here, our progress was slow. It was likely that the forest was swarming with enemies watchful as Argus; and too much caution could not be used. Scarlet Moccasin, who was our leader, seemed to know every inch of the ground. Now he bade us crawl on our hands and knees through a dense thicket of brushwood—now he led us close to the river bank, along which we would walk for some distance, then regain the shelter of the wood. A walk of about a mile brought us close to the base of a steep bluff.

"There are two ways," said our leader, coming to a halt, "by which we can command a view of the cave. One is to creep along the bank of the stream, and the other to ascend the bluff. The latter, I think, is much the best and safer plan, though the most difficult to undertake."

"'Ees," said one of the trappers, "that's surer'n shootin'."

We commenced the ascent of the bluff without further parley. The ascent was extremely laborious; and it took no small amount of exertion to reach the summit.

We approached the edge looking toward the river, and

looked over. The sight was curious. The bluff was some two hundred feet in height; and at the bottom, a few paces from the bank of the river, my eyes fell upon the forms of half a dozen Sioux. They were seated on the ground, their blankets closely wrapped around them to protect them from the pelting rain. Another glance showed me the entrance to the cave. It was some ten feet above the heads of the savages, and could only be reached by a narrow ledge of rock. On the bank, a few feet from the savages, were the canoes!

"See!" exclaimed Scarlet Moccasin, pointing to three objects lying close to the bottom of the cliff, and which, up to this time, had escaped my attention. "They've had some fighting. They must have been killed with stones, since those in the cave are unarmed—if," he added, quickly, "they are in the cave."

"Waugh!" said one of the trappers. "How ar' we a-goin' at 'em? If I he'd my little weepun hyar, I'd soon send one o' them a kitin'. As it is, we must fight 'em at cluss quarters."

"Not so soon," said Scarlet Moccasin, with a smile, and withdrawing from the edge of the cliff.

Around us were lying thousands of bowlders of every size. The young man seized one of these, weighing perhaps fifty pounds, and once more approaching the edge of the cliff, hurled it over! It passed downward like a streak, and struck one of the savages on the crown of his head, mashing him to a jelly. The rest of the savages sprung to their feet with a yell, and gazed up. Three or four of the trappers had imitated their leader's example, and each seized a huge piece of rock. One after another, these were hurled over the cliff, causing the savages to caper round in a very lively manner in order to avoid being hit by some of the missiles. To the trappers, this was sport indeed; and they hurled down rocks in a perfect shower.

The sport, however, was of short duration, for the savages made a sudden rush toward one of the canoes, and embarked in quick haste. Then a few strokes of the paddle sent them beyond harm's reach. It was now their turn to become the assailants, and standing up in the canoe they discharged several arrows at us. It was easy, however, to avoid them, and we hoped that the savages, seeing this, would depart.

But we were disappointed, for they landed again, a few

rods up the stream, where, seating themselves, and wrapping their blankets around them, they kept an incessant watch over our movements.

An hour passed ; still they sat there. Our patience was exhausted, and something or other must be done at once. Should we proceed down the cliff, and attack the savages with our tomahawks ? No ; that was too dangerous a plan. Our enemies would discover us before we had time to reach them, and then we should be at their mercy.

"If," said Scarlet Moccasin, "I had one of those bows lying at the bottom there, we could soon end the affair. I can use the bow pretty well," he added, smiling.

At the bottom were lying several bows, and their quivers of arrows, once the property of the dead bodies beside them. But how was any of them to be procured ? They were lying at least two hundred feet below us, and to me at least, the thing appeared impossible. To Scarlet Moccasin, however, it appeared less difficult. He approached the edge of the cliff, and shouted over :—

"Halloo ! Andrew ! Andrew !"

This, we knew, was the name of one of those who were in charge of the females. A few moments elapsed, then a head was cautiously thrust out of the cave's mouth, and its owner peered up at us. His face assumed an expression of pleasure.

"All safe inside ?" asked our leader.

"Yes," was the answer. "But why don't you come down ?"

"Look yonder," said Scarlet Moccasin, pointing toward the five Sioux. "We have no weapons, except hatchets, and unless you help us, I'm afraid we shall have to remain where we are, for the present. Do you think that you can manage to get one of those bows that are just below you ?"

"It can only be done by making a quick rush."

"Try it, then, for the lives of some of us, at least, depend upon it."

The man seemed to understand this, and immediately prepared to carry out the project. He stepped boldly from the cave, and ran along the ledge which led from it to the ground—although it was not more than a foot and a half wide—with amazing rapidity. The Indians saw him ; but, before they could recover from thier surprise, throw off their

blankets, and rise to their feet, the man had reached the side of one of their fallen comrades, seized his bow and quiver, and was hurrying back to the cave, which he succeeded in reaching, in spite of the arrows discharged at him.

During this, he who had suggested the plan had not been idle. To his belt he ever had attached a long lasso. He had uncoiled this, and flung one end of it over the cliff. It was sufficiently long enough for his purpose, and he ordered him in the cave to attach the bow and quiver to it. The order was promptly executed; and in a twinkling Scarlet Moccasin held the coveted weapons in his hands. During this, the Indians had been watching our proceedings with the utmost interest. Whether they doubted our ability or not to hurt them with one of their own weapons, they stood perfectly still.

"Now," said our leader, drawing an arrow from the quiver, and fixing it to the string, "we can soon drive them from their position."

He drew the bow with the adroitness of a Sioux chief; and a moment after its "twang" was heard, one of the Indians fell to the ground, his brain pierced by the barbed shaft. With a wild yell, the remaining savages commenced a retreat, and before another arrow had time to reach them, they had concealed themselves behind some trees a good distance up the stream. To attack them now was impossible. The position they occupied still commanded a view of the bluff, and as there was no bushes or trees growing upon it which would have concealed us, the idea was not to be entertained for a moment.

"Mr. Montgomery," said Scarlet Moccasin, addressing me, "you can assist us out of the difficulty, if you wish to."

"I!" I exclaimed. "How?"

"This lasso, you perceive, reaches to the bottom. By sliding down it you can reach the canoes, and take one off to the island."

No further explanation was needed. I understood well his meaning, and of course at once consented to undertake the errand. The lasso was lying upon the edge of the cliff. Again one end of it was flung over, and for want of something to fasten it to, my companions grasped a firm hold of

the other end. The next minute I was letting myself hand under hand to the ground. The sight was a fearful one to survey, but trusting to my strength of arm, I felt perfectly secure. I had no fears from the savages, for they were too far off to reach me with their arrows.

A very few minutes sufficed for me to reach the ground. I would have liked to have stepped inside the cave for only a single moment—only to have looked upon *her*. But I curbed my feelings, and made a rush for one of the canoes. I did not make for those nearest me, but for the one lying a few rods up the stream, and which the savages had used some time previously. Springing inside, I seized the paddle, and pushed out into the stream. By this time it had ceased raining, but dark clouds still obscured the sky.

I soon rounded the point, and came in view of the island, about three-quarters of a mile distant. I plied the paddle with all my strength, for I well knew with what impatience those on the island would be waiting.

When I arrived within a few rods of it, I could perceive them upon the bank in a crowd.

"Hullo! thar," a voice called out. "Whar hev'ee been? Whar's the rest?"

I did not answer until I reached the bank, then related in as few words as possible what had transpired since our leaving the island.

"An 'ee say thet thar's a few o' the varmints thar yet?"

"Yes; right near the bottom of the bluff."

"Wal, then, thar's no time to be lost. Pile in, half a dozen o' ye."

Five of the trappers stepped inside the canoe, and after my rifle and revolvers had been handed to me, we pushed off. There was only one paddle, but we made that answer.

When we were close to the opposite bank, we headed the canoe up the stream, and kept along until we came to the point. There we landed. The bluff was but a short distance in front of us, and if the savages had not disappeared during my absence, we would find them at its base. I imparted this to my companions, and we pressed forward with the stealth of a cat. We were not disappointed in our expectations. The four savages were still there. The moment

the eyes of the trappers fell upon them rifles were cocked, raised and fired. When the smoke floated away, the savages had ceased to struggle.

I did not linger to witness more, but bounded toward the cave. As I dashed forward, I glanced up the bluff. Scarlet Moccasin and the rest had heard the shots, and were hurrying downward. So had those in the cave, and the opening was blockaded with those anxious to know what it meant.

A few moments later, I was at the side of my beloved one. It is impossible to describe the pleasure I felt at being with her once more—to know and feel that the love I felt for her was returned—to kiss her pale lips—to utter words of encouragement. Did we speak of the future? Yes. I knew that it was the intention of her brother, as well as her father, to return as soon as possible to the East, and I had the promise of Minnie that, as soon as we reached St. Paul, she would marry me. Of course we conversed in a low tone, as there were plenty of others not far from us.

How long we sat there I know not. When we are near those whom we love time flies on golden wings.

We were disturbed by an unusual clamor outside. We learned that it was caused by the arrival of those who had remained longest on the island. Now commenced a lively scene. The trappers, one and all, rushed inside the cave, a huge fire was lit, and as some of them had been into the woods and procured two or three deer, these were soon cut up and being roasted over the fire. Several of the trappers were so intensely hungry that they did not wait until the meat was cooked, but devoured it raw.

Our repast finished, a portion of us, at least, were the witnesses of another tragedy. The captive Sioux chief had been brought from the Island, and had been thrown down in one corner of the cave. He was now partially unbound, and led outside by several of the trappers. Scarlet Moccasin, at the side of whose sister I was seated, approached me, and, without appearing to notice her, said to me:

"Monsieur, you know the vow I made. Come, I wish you to see me fulfil it."

Pressing the hand of my betrothed, but without uttering a

word, I followed Scarlet Moccasin outside the cave. The trappers in charge of the captive had taken him a short distance up the river-bank, and were leading him up the bluff. We followed in their rear. The poor wretch several times refused to proceed any further, but strong hands grasped him, and he was half led, half jerked onward.

We arrived at the summit. The trappers placed the captive on the ground, then released their hold of him. He seemed to guess the fate intended for him, for he gazed around him with a wild and terrified look. Was there no chance for escape? Hardly. The trappers stood in a circle round him, and he knew that to get through it was impossible.

As for the trappers themselves, what they were about to witness was but sport to them. Their spirits were any thing but cast down, as was shown by their laughs and jests, as they stood surveying the poor wretch in the center.

"Waugh!" said one of them, "a day or two ago, that Injin was savager nor a meat-ax, but now, durn him, he ar' tamer nor a lamb."

"Come," interposed Scarlet Moccasin, stepping inside the circle, "this is not what we have come here for. Bloody Arm," he continued, addressing the savage, who had risen to his feet, "I believe you know me?"

"I know your name, dog of a pale-face! What Sioux knows not that?" and he pointed to the other's left moccasin.

"You do, lying Sioux! You know, too, the vow I made; and you know well what reason I had for making it. Moons upon moons have gone by since her I love was murdered by you and your cowardly braves. They have all, long since, perished. It is now your turn."

Without another word from the lips of either, the lasso we had used that morning was again produced, and knotted around the unfortunate chief's ankles. Then he was dragged to the edge of the cliff—not that side overlooking the river, but that looking toward the west. The other end of the lasso was fastened to a jutting rock.

The crisis had come. A single push given by Scarlet Moccasin, and the Sioux fell headlong over the cliff. Oh! it was a fearful moment. The push—the snapping of the lasso, not

strong enough to bear the strain—and the percussion of the body as it was dashed upon the rocks below!

I approached the precipice, as did several others, and looked down. The dead body of the chief was lying flat upon a sharp rock—a bloody and misshapen mass.

“Rose,” said Scarlet Moccasin, in a voice audible only to those who were standing nearest to him, “thou art avenged! I have kept my vow.”

When we descended to the cave once more, a council was entered into in order to decide what would be our next plan of action.

Now that Bloody Arm and his ferocious band had been destroyed, it was not likely that the settlers around those parts would be disturbed for some time to come. We were now a good day's journey from the spot where New Salem had once stood, and the settlers were desirous of returning as soon as possible. After a good deal of debating, it was decided that the females were to remain where they were for a few days longer, and that the male portion of the villagers, as well as those belonging to our party, were to return the next day, and rebuild the fort for their accommodation, until cabins were once more raised.

Of course, now that our goods had been destroyed, it was the desire of St. Pierre and myself to return to New Orleans as soon as possible. Did I regret the loss? Did I blame myself for embarking in the enterprise?

No! But for that I should never have gained, perhaps, what I did—the affections of a noble and beautiful girl.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

EARLY the following morning, the party that was to return to New Salem departed. I remained behind, for I was one of the few who had been chosen to guard the cave, in case of danger, and to keep up a supply of venison. So was my friend, St. Pierre.

To me, those were days replete with happiness. I was ever—when necessary duties did not interfere—at the side of my betrothed.

For the first two or three days, there was something that surprised, as well as puzzled me. This was the demeanor of St. Pierre. Ever before, he had been buoyant, witty and vivacious; but now he had become silent and thoughtful. Could it be occasioned by the loss of his goods? No. St. Pierre was wealthy, and the loss of a few thousands would not be sufficient to cast him down. For some reason or other I did not like to ask him. Finally, the riddle was solved.

One evening—the sun was just sinking below the horizon—Minnie and I were seated on the river bank, a short distance from the cave. My arm was around her waist, and we were conversing in low tones, when the sound of footsteps caused us both to look round. Walking slowly past, and not perceiving us, were two persons whom we instantly recognized. They were St. Pierre, and the sister of the Englishman. His arm was round her waist, and his head bent sideways as he listened to what she was saying. The words I could not catch; they were uttered in too low a tone for that. This, as well as by the glance which each bestowed upon the other, told us they were lovers.

I felt surprised at this, for St. Pierre had often told me that it was impossible—since he had been once deceived—for him to ever love again. And I believed him; because I was, then, a mere novice in the knowledge of human nature.

Presently, the two seated themselves at a short distance

from us, still being unaware that there were any observers of them. The two had not been seated long, before another actor appeared upon the scene—the Londoner.

He did not perceive me and my companion, for his eyes were kept steadily fixed upon his sister and my friend. He was approaching them with the stealth of a cat, his face wearing an expression that I should have thought impossible for a man of his disposition to assume, had I not seen it.

What could the reason be?

I knew that he hated St. Pierre. He had hated him ever since the affair in the bar-room at New Orleans, and now that he saw him with his sister—seated at her side, his arm round her waist—it was too much. Lightly as he stepped, St. Pierre's quick ear caught the sound, and looked round. His eyes fell upon he who had caused it; and the latter, seeing he was discovered, boldly approached the two.

A loud and stormy discussion followed, in which the Londoner, having two to contend against, got the worst of it. He soon returned to the cave, mortified and crestfallen.

A week later found us in New Salem once more. The fort had been rebuilt, and several cabins raised. We lingered in the village for a few days more, then a party of us set out for St. Paul. Among us were Scarlet Moccasin, his father and sister, St. Pierre, the Londoner and his sister, the trapper, Bill Price, and a number of traders. The distance was to be accomplished in canoes; and after bidding the villagers, whose hardships we had for the time shared, an affectionate farewell, we dropped down the blue St. Peter's.

In due time, we arrived at St. Paul. We learned that a boat would leave for the South in two days; and all of us—with the exception of the trappers who had accompanied us—at once engaged berths.

That very night saw me wedded to the lovely "Silver Leaf," and also my friend, St. Pierre, to the English girl. To my regret, he announced his intention of proceeding at once to New York, and from thence to London. I hated to part with him—a more devoted, a more noble-hearted, a kinder friend than him never breathed.

Among the last of those to whom I said good-by, was the trapper, Bill Price.

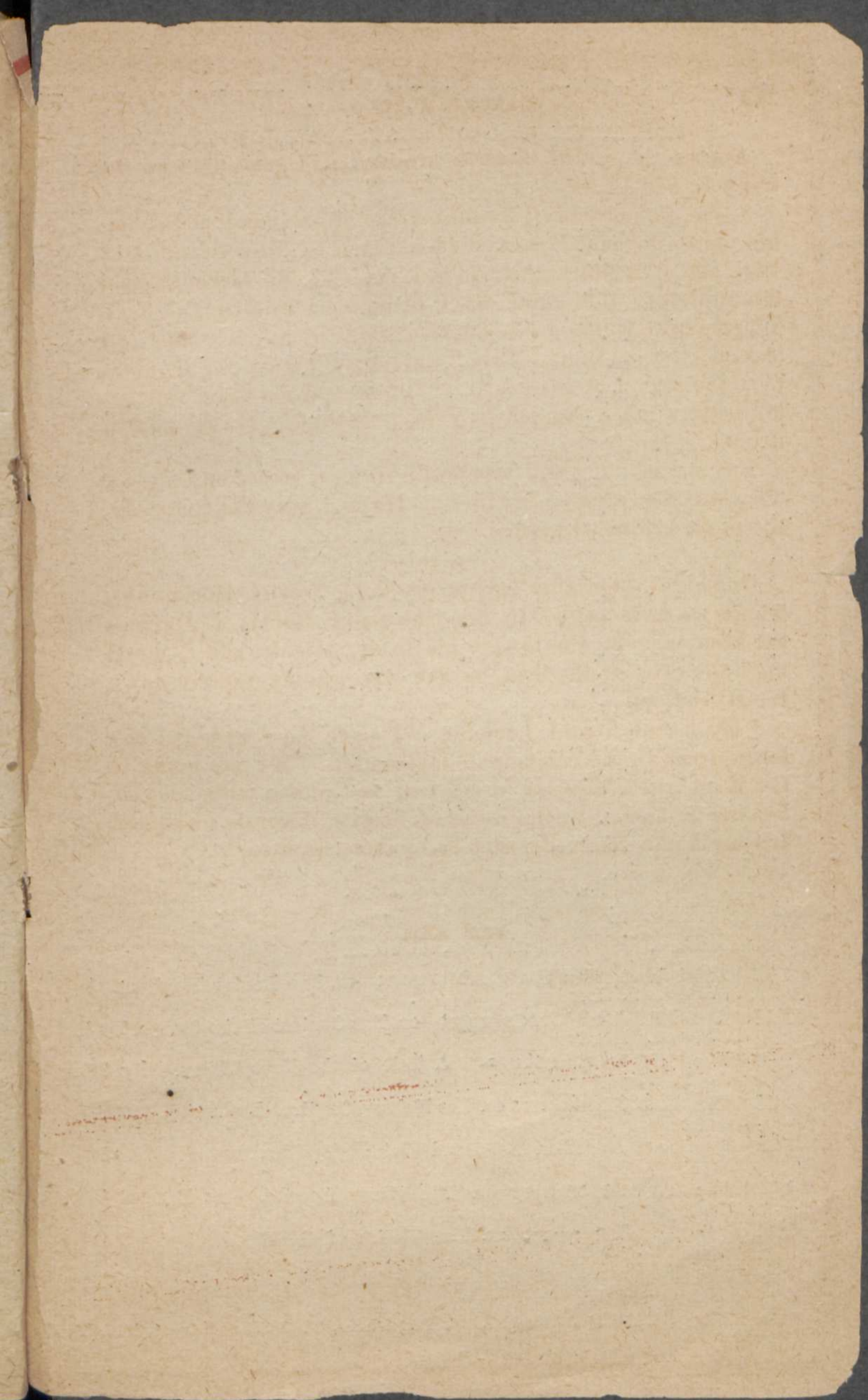
"Wal, young feller," he said, grasping my hand, and drawing me to one side, "so you've cottoned to 'Silver Leaf,' eh? Wal, she ar' a purty gurl, an' no mistake, by Geehosephat! howsumever, this child don't believe in women, *he* don't. When I war young an' soople, the sight o' a purty gurl 'ud 'casion a durned rumpus hyar," and the trapper placed his hand over the region of his heart. "But they w'u'd soon wanish, an' leave a feller happier 'n ever. Waugh! Let's take a drink."

But one of our party was destined never to accompany us. That was the father of my bride. He died, very unexpectedly, the night before we started.

One night, soon after leaving St. Paul, Scarlet Moccasin—whom we now called by his true name, Robert Lorraine—the Londoner, St. Pierre and his bride, Minnie and I, stood upon the deck of the boat, as she was gliding rapidly down the Mississippi.

"My friends," said Lorraine, "I have now changed my forest dress for the costume of civilization. We are going to the East, where my past deeds will be known only to you. Let me be known by the name of Scarlet Moccasin no longer. Let my name, like my deeds, be forever forgotten."

THE END.



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